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**INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT AT HISTORICALLY BLACK  
COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A MULTI-CASE STUDY**

by

Lakeisha S. Carter

A Dissertation

Submitted to the  
Department of Educational Services & Leadership  
College of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirement

For the degree of  
Doctor of Education

at

Rowan University

March 8, 2018

Dissertation Chair: Monica Reid Kerrigan, Ed.D.

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## **Dedications**

I would like to dedicate this to my three angels, the women who taught me about the importance of education and reaching out to serve others: my granny Rosie Lee Smith and aunts Patricia A. Turner and Sheryl J. Burch. Thank you for the modeling the way and may you all rest in heaven.

I would also like to dedicate this to the most resilient children I know: Rayanna and Johnnie. I learn something new from them each day. They inspire me to be better. I thank God that he allowed me to be in both your lives. I love you both with all my heart!

## **Acknowledgments**

To God be the glory! Thank you, God, for your grace and never giving up on me. The doctoral journey has been a life changing experience. I would like to thank my chair, Dr. Monica Kerrigan. From my days as her graduate research assistant to now, she has always believed in me. She has supported me both professionally and personally -- I am forever grateful! Dr. MaryBeth Walpole, thank you for showing me how to be a true social justice leader. I appreciate your support during this process. Dr. Marybeth Gasman, you are one of the leading researchers of HBCUs, and you still were willing to serve on my committee. Thank you for your support and expert feedback!

Mommie, I love you dearly. You have supported my dreams and allowed me to fly. Thank you for teaching me how to gracefully move through womanhood and how to be a great mother. I owe you big Cookie! Renee, thank you for unconsciously teaching me how to take risks. I want to thank all my sista-girls (my “day-ones” & “Jersey-sisters”) for continuous support and words of encouragement. To all my babysitters, it truly takes a village and I am thankful for you all. God sent me a special person in the middle of doctoral course work: he is my friend, partner in love, favorite go-getter, and husband. Johnnie you have funded my dream and never complained about anything. I appreciate you for your calmness, patience, humor, support, and words of encouragement. I love you babe! To Rayanna and Johnnie, I hope my sacrifices help you walk the red carpets to your dreams.

Finally, thank you to the Institutional Advancement professionals at the historically Black community colleges who allowed me to learn about the great work they do daily and share it with the world.

## **Abstract**

Lakeisha S. Carter  
INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT AT HISTORICALLY BLACK  
COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A MULTI-CASE STUDY  
2017-2018

Monica Reid Kerrigan, Ed.D.  
Doctor of Education

In this multi-case study, three cases were studied and four participants were interviewed to understand institutional advancement (IA) at historically Black community colleges (HBCCs) and how the institutional advancement professionals engage the alumni in the fundraising process. The results of this study are presented in this dissertation and illuminate the work of the IA professionals at HBCCs. The participants reported what institutional advancement looks like at each individual HBCCs. This study shows the commonalities and differences in IA at HBCCs and the professionals' perceptions of their interactions with alumni. The professionals discussed the fundraising challenges for advancement at HBCCs. Finally, implications for practice, leadership, and research are presented.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The “Great Recession” in the U.S. created an economic downfall and presented new financial challenges for Americans (Long, 2013; Rich, 2013; Zumeta, 2010). Starting in late 2007 and ending in 2010, this was recorded as the longest recession in America since World War II (Rich, 2013). Due to tremendous job loss, unemployment rates rose to about 50%. Therefore, people found it difficult to maintain their homes, cars, and economic statuses. Unemployment rates in various states ranged from one percent to about nine percent (Zumeta, 2010). Arizona, Alabama, California, Florida, and Nevada experienced the highest unemployment rates between the years of 2006 to 2012 (Johnson, 2014; Zumeta, 2010).

The recession created a financial crisis for state and local governments; revenues and budgets were impacted (Zumeta, 2010). States generate a large portion of their revenue through sales and income taxes, and the collection of the taxes declined during the financial crisis (Zumeta, 2010). This decrease in revenue resulted in large budget gaps, budget cuts, and new funding priorities (Zumeta, 2010). States were forced to make major cuts in their annual budgets and spending. Consequently, state and local government’s financial challenges impacted the funding streams to the public higher education institutions (Johnson, 2014; Long, 2013; Mitchell & Leachman, 2015; Zumeta, 2010).

State and local government funding for public colleges and universities have declined since the Great Recession (Chappell, 2015; Mitchell & Leachman, 2015;

Zumeta, 2015). The state and local government funding cuts to public colleges and universities have led to major consequences, which include colleges and universities being forced to compensate for the loss of funding by increasing student tuition (Mitchell & Leachman, 2015; Zumeta, 2010). Tuition revenues at public colleges and universities increased between the years of 2008-2010, and the average tuition rose to about 25 % of the incoming revenue (Chappell, 2015; Long, 2013; Mitchell & Leachman, 2015; Zumeta, 2010).

As a result, public colleges and universities have become less affordable for Americans. The tuition increases, and recession created a sense of uncertainty among Americans, but people attended colleges and universities throughout the government's state of depression to seek better opportunities. Thus, the recession created a boom in college enrollment, especially at community college campuses. Americans borrowed more federal funds (i.e. student loans and Pell Grants) through financial aid to pay for their education during the recession (Long, 2013).

### **HBCUs Fundraising for Survival**

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the U.S. and U.S. Virgin Islands are defined by the U.S. Higher Education Act of 1965 as any public and private college and university that was founded before 1964 with the initial mission to provide education to Black Americans (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Although, the historical missions of HBCUs were to provide access and education to Black Americans, HBCUs have become higher education institutions that provide education to diverse

student populations. Today there is a total of 105 colleges and universities in the U.S. identified as HBCUs.

HBCUs have historically been less well funded than predominately White colleges and universities (Gasman, 2009; Minor, 2008). HBCUs have been struggling financially for years and fighting to survive (Rivard, 2014). Since the recession of 2008-2010, HBCUs have had to make significant cuts to their annual budgets, educational programs, and faculty (Gasman, 2009; Zumeta, 2010). As state and local government funds decreased, public HBCUs were forced to seek alternative revenue (Zumeta, 2010); the need to increase fundraising efforts became critical.

Fundraising has always been a practice at HBCUs; however, there are some institutions that have made it a more of a priority than others. Fundraising is a vital component to the survival of all HBCUs, especially the public HBCUs (Barrett, 2006; Cohen, 2006, 2008; Gasman, 2000; Rivard, 2014; Tindall, 2007, 2008; Williams, 2010). Fundraising has been important to help all colleges and universities generate money for endowments. Endowments, which are the financial assets donated to help support higher education institutions, at HBCUs are generally less than they are at PWIs (Gasman, 2009).

HBCUs led by presidents who play an active role in the philanthropic process and fundraising events help increase college endowments (Barrett, 2006; Conwell, 2013). HBCU presidents and leaders who lead their institutions with entrepreneurial decision-making styles and strategies have had great fundraising success (Williams, 2010).



Presidents of HBCUs who are visionary leaders can develop a road map of success for everyone at their institutions to follow. It is important for HBCU presidents to be innovative and encourage campus community members to generate ideas to help sustain the campuses into the future. HBCU presidents should see alumni engagement and fundraising as a priority. Their fundraising efforts should be reflected in the college's strategic plan. A goal listed in the strategic plan becomes a priority for all community members to which they are held accountable.

HBCUs are increasing their outreach to alumni and fundraising because of limited state and local government funding. Alumni support is a critical component to the survival of HBCUs (Fields, 2001). Alumni support includes financial donations, volunteerism, or other service opportunities on or off campus. Alumni support could also be in the form of a "public display of affection;" alumni can spread the word about their alma maters to their families or friends and encourage others to support the HBCU campuses. However, the people primarily responsible for fundraising at HBCUs have experienced challenges with engaging alumni in the fundraising process (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013). HBCUs are going to find it difficult to sustain their campuses into the future without alumni support and financial donations (Gasman, 2013).

Alumni support can be earned in a variety of ways. HBCUs can gain alumni support if the institutions reach out to the group of alumni who have a sense of connection to their alma maters because of their positive student experiences. Alumni are more likely to donate to their alma maters if they feel a sense of obligation to give back to the organization that provided them great personal memories (Gasman & Bowman, III,

2013). Alumni are motivated to donate to their HBCU alma maters if they believe they are helping current students of color, which is referred to as a “racial uplift” (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013, p. 22). HBCU fundraisers have to gain the trust the alumni to essentially build a long-lasting relationship (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013). Additionally, HBCU fundraisers connect with local clergy members and Black fraternities and sororities to encourage alumni to give back to HBCUs (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013).

Minor (2008) argues that the survival of HBCUs will only happen if the institutions are successful with addressing their images in the public. Public opinions about HBCUs are both positive and negative. Image building is one of the strategies that will help HBCUs set the foundation to expand their fundraising opportunities (Minor, 2008). The media outlets have presented limited information about how well HBCUs are performing and the positive student outcomes, such as higher graduation rates for students of color, graduates feeling well off financially, and high numbers of alumni donors in the fundraising process (Gasman, Baez, & Turner, 2008). The negative news on HBCUs show the leadership of a small number of the institutions has been poor (Fields, 2001), which has led to major financial challenges, unsuccessful development plans, and uncertain futures (Esters et al., 2016). Generating more positive narratives of HBCUs could potentially help the HBCU brand and lead to more fundraising and sustainability options (Gasman & Commodore, 2014).

## **Fundraising at American Community Colleges**

Community colleges in the U.S. are primarily funded with state and local government funds, specifically 48 % of the incoming revenue (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016; Goldstein, 2005). Community colleges never had to make fundraising a priority (Hall, 2002), because states and colleges were not experiencing any financial constraints. Since the 2008 recession, however, it has become more important for community colleges to generate private funds (Hall, 2002). Fundraising is critical for the future of community colleges (Jones, 2010; Skari, 2014). Fundraising at the community college level is a practice that has been developing over the past couple of decades (Skari, 2014). As fundraising has become a top priority for community colleges, campus leaders and representatives have had to work on building relationships with a variety of stakeholders to help generate private funds (Collett, 2014; Hall, 2002; Skari, 2014).

Community colleges have been the experts in relationship building (Hall, 2002), especially with board members, local businesses, and corporate partners (Collett, 2014). Community colleges have great relationships with local businesses, because local businesses are paying the local county taxes, which ultimately fund the community colleges (Goldstein, 2005). In addition, the relationships the colleges build with corporate businesses help provide larger campus sponsorships for specific programs and services.

Community colleges have not been the experts with fundraising practices and building relationships with alumni as compared to their 4-year college or university counterparts (Skari, 2014). The current challenge for community colleges is to gain an

understanding of the best practices for engaging alumni in the fundraising process (Skari, 2014). Alumni support can be critical to college fundraising efforts (Fields, 2001). Alumni support, whether it is word-of-mouth advertisement or financial contributions, can have a positive impact on the advancement goals of the community colleges.

Community colleges have used advancement strategies that have been both unsuccessful and successful. Jones (2010) argues that community college alumni involvement in the giving process is low and is viewed as one of the unsuccessful fundraising strategies. Special events are known to four-year colleges and universities as one of the best fundraising practices, however, the events do not generate the most funds for community colleges. The most successful fundraising strategy for community colleges is annual giving from community college stakeholders (Jones, 2010). Relationship building and cultivation with key community college donors generate the most financial rewards (Collett, 2014; Fields, 2001; Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013; Hall, 2002; Jones, 2010; Skari, 2014).

### **Historically Black Community Colleges**

There are currently 11 public Historically Black community colleges (HBCCs) in the U.S. The original missions of HBCCs were to provide access to higher education for people of color and produce community members who are ready for the local workforce (Gasman, 2015). HBCCs now have the same missions as other non-HBCU community colleges, which is to provide access to higher education for all people (Lum, 2004).

HBCCs are located in southern states in the U.S., and most of them were founded before 1960 (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). This is the era when Blacks were seeking higher education opportunities but were also facing tremendous institutionalized racial experiences (Gasman, 2015). More than half of the HBCCs are located in small cities and rural towns, which provides direct access to the local communities (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). The majority of the HBCCs have student enrollments around 5,000 or less. HBCCs have higher numbers of women students. The majority of HBCCs have a large African American student population, two HBCCs have over 50 % of White students, and one HBCC in Texas' largest student population are Hispanic students.

HBCCs do not receive the funding, attention, or recognition that most of the 4-year HBCUs receive (Gasman, 2015; Minor, 2008, Morgan, 2007). HBCCs are funded like other community colleges, through state and local taxes (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016; Gasman, 2015). HBCCs are experiencing the same state and local government funding issues because of the Great Recession. The HBCCs have had to look at advancement models and alternative revenue streams to keep the institutions afloat and provide a path to a viable future (Esters et al., 2016; Fields, 2001; Gasman, Baez, & Turner, 2008).

HBCCs have a few of the same as goals the four-year HBCUs, such as providing access to local and low-income students and producing graduates who be successful in the workforce and local communities (Gasman, 2015). HBCCs are drafting new strategic plans with the goals of developing new brands to attract diverse groups of students and

establishing a positive image in their local communities (Gasman, 2015; Gasman, Baez, & Turner, 2008; Gasman & Commodore, 2014). They are developing new institutional advancement or development offices, with new alumni programs to establish better relationships with their alumni base. The ultimate goal is to develop a giving alumni base, who will actively provide financial donations to their alma maters (Gasman, 2013).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the U.S., the Institutional Advancement (IA) divisions and Development offices of colleges and universities are charged with fundraising. Fundraising at HBCUs helps to generate funds for the colleges and institutional endowments (Barrett, 2006; Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013). HBCUs and HBCCs have historically been less well federally funded than predominately White higher education institutions (Berry, 2005; Just, 2015; Minor, 2008). HBCUs have lower endowments than other 4-year minority-serving and predominately White higher education institutions. An endowment can be vital to the sustainability of a college or university, including HBCUs (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013).

Although community colleges in the U.S. have experience with building supportive relationships with entrepreneurs, corporations, and foundations to engage them in the giving process (Akin, 2005; Jones, 2010), they are new to the concept of fundraising and engaging alumni for financial donations (Hall, 2002; Ryan & Palmer, 2005). HBCCs have to start engaging alumni in the giving process for financial support to increase their endowments (Gasman, 2013). Currently, there is limited research on IA

at HBCCs and the fundraising activities and strategies that are used to engage alumni in the giving process (Morgan, 2007).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand Institutional Advancement (IA) at HBCCs from the perspectives of IA professionals. For the purposes of this study, IA is described as the functional area that coordinates fundraising activities, social exchanges with alumni, and other strategies to generate private funds to contribute to the college, college foundation, and/or endowment. I am conducting this multiple case study to understand fundraising at HBCCs and how the IA professionals engage alumni in the giving process at the community college. This multiple case study will enable a better understanding of what IA is at an HBCC and the challenges of engaging alumni in the fundraising process at an HBCC.

There is little known about IA at HBCCs (Morgan, 2007; Stake, 2006), community college fundraising at minority serving institutions (Goodman, 2015), and there is a lack of scholarly research on minority serving institutions (Nguyen et al., 2015; Tindall, 2007). This study will provide a small glimpse into the fundraising and alumni giving processes at HBCCs and add to the current literature on fundraising at HBCUs.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will help me to understand IA at historically Black community colleges:

1. What is Institutional Advancement at HBCCs?

2. What are the fundraising activities and strategies used by HBCC Institutional Advancement professionals to engage alumni in giving to the community college?
3. How do Institutional Advancement professionals at HBCCs perceive their social exchanges with alumni?
4. How does social exchange theory help us to understand Institutional Advancement at HBCCs?
  - a. What do the Institutional Advancement professionals describe as challenges of fundraising at HBCCs?
  - b. How does trust play a role in the Institutional Advancement fundraising at HBCCs?
  - c. What mutual benefits result from the social exchanges between Institutional Advancement professionals and alumni?

### **Significance of the Study**

Fundraising to gather alternative sources of income is critical for all HBCUs (Barrett, 2006; Berry, 2005; Cohen, 2006, 2008; Gasman, 2000; Rivard, 2014; Tindall, 2006, 2008; Williams, 2010). I will use a case study approach to study IA at HBCCs. I want to find out how the IA professionals engage alumni to generate alternative income for their institutions in order for my reader understand IA at HBCCs, the fundraising processes at HBCCs, and the outcomes of the IA professionals' social exchanges with alumni. There is a lack of knowledge on HBCCs (Morgan, 2007), and the impact they make in the communities they serve and the exchange of support from the alumni who



benefited from receiving an education at the HBCCs. It is important to start the narrative about these colleges that the mainstream higher education community does not pay attention to, and to help build a knowledge base to generate support for the HBCCs (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). Most literature on HBCUs has a focus on the 4-year colleges and universities.

The study of HBCUs endowments and alumni giving was suggested as one of the most understudied topics in higher education research (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). Anyone who cares about seeing more storytelling and positive narratives on HBCUs will be interested in this topic (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). Audiences that may benefit from the results of this study include the presidents of the HBCCs, the boards of trustees of the HBCC foundations, and other leaders within IA or development of HBCCs.

Overall, this study helps us to understand IA at HBCCs. My goal is to make a contribution to the literature on HBCCs; scholars have limited information on IA at HBCCs. This study may expose the strengths and challenges that HBCC IA professionals may have with engaging alumni in the giving process (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). Illuminating the HBCC strengths and challenges of their IA offices could potentially advocate for more support for HBCC and other underrepresented higher education institutions (Stake, 2010).

### **Definitions of Terms**

The following definitions will be used during the course of this dissertation research study:

**Alumni.** Former students of an institution, which includes non-graduates and graduates (Skari, 2011; Starace, 2012).

**College friends.** People in the external community who take an interest in a college or university and sometimes choose to advocate for the college or make a financial donation to the institution. Sometimes the individuals do or do not have a personal connection to the institution. These people are usually not graduates of the institution.

**Cultivate.** To improve or develop a relationship with alumni, volunteers, and potential donors.

**Development.** A higher education department with the primary responsibility of building support from stakeholders through internal and external community relations and on-going fundraising (Berry, 2005).

**Endowment.** A large amount of money that is given to a school, hospital, etc., and that is used to pay for its creation and continued support (Goldstein, 2005; Merriam-Webster, 2018). Higher education institutional endowments are used to help towards the advancement of the institution and assistance with the budgeted expenses (Berry, 2005). This includes the support of student scholarships, research, capital campaigns, and the enhancement of campus facilities.

**Friend-raising.** The act of engaging individuals in the external community to advocate for the college and create awareness to individuals about the goals and needs of the college.

**Fundraising.** The activity of raising money for the college or university community through soliciting and collecting money from various campus stakeholders.

**Historically Black college and university (HBCU).** They are institutions of higher education that were federally designated by the U.S. government and historically founded with the intentions to provide access to higher education to people of color. The majority of the HBCUs were founded before 1964. Although most HBCUs were founded to support people of color, all of the institutions serve students from diverse backgrounds (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

**Historically Black community college (HBCC).** HBCUs that have two-year associate's degree programs. Also, founded with the intentions to provide access to higher education to people of color. Many of these HBCCs were founded after 1964.

**Institutional advancement (IA).** Divisions within higher education institutions that are responsible for the advancement of the institution. It is IAs opportunity to win an understanding and gain support from various stakeholders through fundraising or development (Berry, 2005). Primary functions of the division include: public relations, alumni engagement, fundraising, and overall development of the college community.

**Institutional advancement professional.** A person who works in the functional area of institutional advancement or development within a higher education setting. Their primary responsibility is to work towards the growth of the college or university they work for, and some of the work is done through relationship building and fundraising (Starace, 2012).

**Social exchange.** Per social exchange theory, social exchanges are the interactions between two actors or parties (Emerson, 1976).

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter of this dissertation provided the background, problem statement, purpose, and significance of the study. Chapter two presents on the theoretical framework of social exchange theory and how the theory will be used to understand the context of IA at HBCCs. In addition, chapter two contains relevant information on IA at HBCUs, HBCCs, community college foundations, endowments, and the individuals in the community college responsible for fundraising. The third chapter describes the case study methods including how data was collected to understand IA at HBCCs in the United States and case study data analysis procedures. Additionally, in chapter three I will discuss how I ensured quality and rigor in this study and ethical considerations. Chapter four reveals the findings of the study with a cross-case analysis of all the cases in the study. Finally, in chapter five, I discuss my interpretations of the case study findings, answer the research questions, and provide some implications for policy, practice, and research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter provides a review of the literature beginning with a discussion of social exchange theory as a theoretical framework and how it can be used to understand institutional advancement (IA) and fundraising at historically Black community colleges (HBCCs). This review of the literature has been divided into four sections: (1) theoretical framework, (2) community colleges, (3) IA at HBCUs, and (4) actors in the community college.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

Social exchange theory “is a frame of reference that takes the movement of valued things (resources) through social processes as its focus” (Emerson, 1976, p. 359). It is a framework that is used to explain how people interact, communicate with one another, and build relationships that potentially result in desired benefits (Emerson, 1976; Molm, 2003). The social exchange framework will be used to understand HBCC IA, fundraising process, and the social exchanges IA professionals have with HBCC alumni to enhance the level of giving to the community college. The social exchange framework suggests relationship building and anticipated rewards can motivate people to get involved in the fundraising process (Skari, 2011). The theory will provide a foundation to explore the importance of the interactions between HBCC IA professionals and alumni, and how the interactions can result in desired fundraising outcomes.

Social exchange uncovers the complex relationships in a partnership between IA professionals and their potential donors. Desired outcomes of a social exchange could

potentially be beneficial for both the IA professional and HBCC alumni (Molm, 2003). Ultimately, the goal of most social exchanges would be to create a mutually beneficial partnership, which presents a positive reward for both parties. For this study, the IA professionals will be identified as the actors who initiate social interactions in a “market” with other actors (Cook & Lasher, 1996; Emerson, 1976). The market can be defined as a place “where many people assemble to engage in transactions” (Emerson, 1976, p. 350). In this particular study, the market will be defined as the process of social exchanges between actors and where rules are established about the social relationships and outcomes (Molm, 2003). The other actors could be potential financial donors to the community colleges, such as campus community members, external community partners, and alumni.

Social exchange theory is a framework of four concepts of trust, reciprocity, costs, and rewards which lead to a mutually beneficial partnership. Social exchange theory concepts will be used to help us understand the social interactions between IA professionals and HBCC alumni. The social exchange framework presents the overall goal of the exchanges as a mutually beneficial partnership, which is an established relationship built on trust, fairness, and reciprocity. Establishing a trusting relationship can be critical to the social exchange process and the potential outcomes of the process.

### **Mutually Beneficial Partnership**

The social exchange framework helps us to understand that individuals are motivated to engage in social interactions with others to create a mutually beneficial partnership (Searle, 1990). The basic concepts of social exchanges have to be visible in a

relationship between two actors in order for the mutually beneficial partnership to be a success (Molm, 2003). The interactions between IA professionals and HBCC alumni should display a mutual control of the relationship and power needs to be shared in the relationship (Hall, 2002). The ultimate goal of a successful social exchange process is developing relationships among actors that are trusting, fair, and interdependent.

**Trust is the key.** Trust must be established early on in a social exchange relationship. Trust between actors can be the key to having a successful relationship. The foundation of the relationship between IA professionals and alumni is built on trust. The social exchange framework supports the idea that it takes time for actors to develop a trusting relationship through many exchanges or interactions. The actors develop an interdependent relationship, which allows each party to rely on one another for some level of support. Black HBCU alumni have revealed that they are more compelled to donate funds to their alma mater if they trust the IA professionals and the president of the institution (Gasman, 2000; Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013; Tindall, 2008).

**Reciprocity.** Reciprocity focuses on providing a favor for someone else in exchange for a favor. Reciprocity is a normal practice in any social exchange process (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Molm, 2003). The actors involved in a social exchange are engaged in the relationship and they generally negotiate the exchange of good deeds (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1976; Molm, 2003; Searle, 1990). The exchanges between the IA professionals and HBCC alumni are based on reciprocation (Gasman, 2000; Searle, 1990). Exchanges between both IA professionals and alumni have to start with a foundation of trust, fairness, and equity, which will hopefully grow

into a mutually respectful relationship. Each person involved in the exchange will receive something and the benefit may not be a material (Searle, 1990).

**Exchanges in a “just world”.** Social exchange framework suggests a relationship between the two actors should be based on the justice principle; and therefore, fairness and equality must be a part of the relationship (Searle, 1990). IA professionals have to be fair during the on-going negotiations with HBCC alumni. Higher education fundraising has to include numerous social exchanges with alumni (Cook & Lasher, 1996). The time that the advancement professionals invest with alumni must lead to fair outcomes that have been negotiated by both parties.

**Costs of social exchanges.** IA professionals and HBCC alumni would like to maximize their gains in the social exchange, while they are minimizing their costs (Emerson, 1976; Searle, 1990). The goal of investing time in the relationship with alumni is to create a mutually beneficial partnership which will generate financial contributions. However, some other gains include alumni participating in events and providing other services to the college community. IA professionals strive “to maximize their gains and minimize their costs in the exchange relation” (Searle, 1990, p. 2), and alumni usually want to minimize their costs. Some alumni are only looking to provide services to the college through volunteer opportunities. The alumni seek to gain status, networking opportunities, and charitable donation tax deductions through their exchanges with the IA professionals.



**Anticipated rewards.** In any IA or development department, the goal is to entice potential donors to make financial contributions to the college, foundation, or endowment. The interactions between IA professionals and alumni can lead to anticipated outcomes that are positive or negative. The potential positive outcomes of the social interactions between advancement professionals and alumni are: new relationships; the level of participation of alumni; service to the college; and an increase in financial contributions to the college, foundation, or endowment.

Positive rewards for alumni tend to be non-tangible (Molm, 2003). For example, social exchanges between actors can “provide socially valued outcomes” (Molm, 2003, p. 2). Donors may get the following for making financial contributions to a college or university: a tax deduction, love from the institutional community, public acknowledgement, status from within and outside the college or university, and access to people or institutional benefits. Potential negative outcomes may be: relationships could fail, alumni involvement decreases, no financial contributions are received from alumni, and endowments are low or non-existent. If the exchanges between IA professionals and alumni result in a positive reward, alumni are more likely to continue their relationships with the IA professionals and increase the level of support for the HBCC (Emerson, 1976).

The aforementioned concepts of social exchange theory sets up a framework for a close examination of IA at HBCCs. I will provide some information on IA at HBCUs. Additionally, HBCCs will be explored and what advancement means at those institutions and who is responsible for advancement and fundraising. The actors at the HBCCs are

typically engaged in social exchanges to help generate private funds, but I have identified who supports HBCCs fundraising, how IA professional engage alumni, and what motivates alumni to donate to their alma maters.

### **Community Colleges**

Community colleges were once described as an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century phenomenon, because of the establishment of the two-year colleges. The initial goals were to provide apprenticeship and vocational training opportunities to young adults (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2014). Young adults, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, were in need of occupational education that would prepare them for the workforce in the local communities (Cohen, Brawer & Kisker, 2014). The early community colleges were better known as junior colleges and they provided opportunities to students to extend their skills and knowledge base without leaving their homes to attend larger colleges and universities. Attending 4-year colleges and universities would sometimes require students to travel long distances and be away from their families.

In the last 50 years, the 2-year institutions have evolved from the "junior college" status and into what we may know today as community colleges. Community colleges are the institutions within the American higher education systems that continue "opening the doors of educational opportunity to attend college" (Vaughn, p. 103, 1986). Community colleges have been the places to offer access to all with the opportunity to get a formal post-secondary education and learn essential skills that the workforce demands.

Community colleges serve a diverse student body, including students from a variety of socio-economic levels and a disproportionate percentage of students of color

(American Association of Community Colleges, 2016; Jones, 2010). However, students who usually attend community colleges are adult learners who would like to further their education in a supportive and adult-learning friendly environment (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016; Juskiewicz, 2016). “Traditional age” (ages 18 to 22) students also attend community colleges to work on obtaining an Associate degree or as a stepping stone before transitioning to a 4-years colleges or universities.

There are other students who attend community colleges because of specific majors that will lead them to their desired career paths. Many of the community college students are more inclined to enroll in the technical or vocational programs, but there are others who prefer to get degrees in liberal arts. Community college students are also looking for educational opportunities that are convenient to their life situation: many community colleges are located in nearby cities or counties that are not far from home or work (Juskiewicz, 2016). In addition, community colleges continue to offer education at affordable costs (Jones, 2010).

Community colleges have become more attractive in the past couple of decades (Jones, 2010). The boom in community college attractiveness and enrollment consists of more people of color (Jones, 2010; Juskiewicz, 2016; Lum, 2004). Community colleges have provided opportunities to students of color by providing them initial access to higher education (Lum, 2004). Community colleges have historically provided access to people who may not have been able to attend 4-year colleges or universities. Community colleges’ original mission of providing access to all (Lum, 2004) motivates students to

seek educational opportunities in a setting in which they feel welcome (Conrad & Gasman, 2015).

### **Historically Black Community Colleges**

According to the Higher Education Act (1965), historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are colleges and universities that were established before 1965 with the intent of providing education to Black Americans. There are 105 HBCUs in the U.S. and 11 are public community colleges ([www.ed.gov/whhbcu](http://www.ed.gov/whhbcu)). These 2-years public institutions were founded with the intentions of providing educational opportunities for Blacks in the southern United States. HBCCs were started with “religious origins,” just as a large majority of the 4-year HBCUs (Morgan, 2007, p.1).

HBCCs initial missions were to provide access to higher education for people of color, but the missions have changed to provide educational opportunities for all, including a focus on underprepared students (Conrad & Gasman, 2015). Some HBCCs’ current enrollments reflect the overall community college mission of providing access to all students (Lum, 2004), and show higher numbers of non-minority students. For example, in 1994, Shelton State Community College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama merged with C. A. Fredd State Technical College. C. A. Fredd State Technical College was identified as an original HBCU ([www.sheltonstate.edu](http://www.sheltonstate.edu)). Although the two colleges merged, Shelton State Community College provides educational opportunities to all people but is still recognized as an HBCC. Shelton State Community College’s current student enrollment for White students is 22% higher than the Black student enrollment.

Students who attend HBCCs seek higher education opportunities for a variety of reasons. Students historically attended urban HBCCs because of access opportunities to higher education (Hammons, 1999). HBCC students primarily attend the campuses due to the close proximity to their homes. HBCCs provide educational opportunities at a more affordable price as compared to other 4-year colleges and universities, and this attracts many low-income students (Conrad & Gasman, 2015; Hammons, 1999). HBCCs usually have larger populations of “non-traditional” students, such as students who are parents and adult learners (i.e. 23 years and older).

Students attend the HBCCs looking for specific majors which will lead them to their desired career paths (Hammons, 1999; Morgan, 2007). HBCCs provide liberal arts and/or technical curriculums. There is flexibility in course delivery and this attracts students who may need remedial, day or evening, and on-line course offerings. The age of the student was a large factor in the completion of a degree program, most non-traditional age students were more likely to have higher cumulative grade point averages than traditional age students and successfully graduate (Hammons, 1999).

### **Institutional Advancement at HBCUs**

Current economic challenges and the decline in federal and state funding in the U.S. (Lederman, 2012) have impacted the funding to HBCUs (Rivard, 2014; Stuart, 2014). The financial hardships at HBCUs have made it difficult to enhance the quality of campus services and provide adequate amounts of scholarships to students. HBCUs have been forced to adapt to less external public funding streams and take responsibility for generating more private funds through on-going social interactions with institutional

stakeholders, such as local clergy members and alumni (Gasman, 2006; Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013). HBCUs have a responsibility to cultivate relationships with alumni and engage them in the fundraising processes to help address financial challenges (Cohen, 2008). These challenges have resulted in the HBCUs maintaining low endowments, which can be permanent funding sources for the institutions.

Fundraising is a high priority for all U.S. colleges and universities and can be the key to sustainability into the future (Cohen, 2006, 2008; Fields, 2001; Vineburgh, 2011). Fundraising is a critical component to the survival of HBCUs (Cohen, 2006). The fundraising priorities and initiatives are different at each HBCU and this depends on the structure of the IA or development offices (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013). The primary responsibility of fundraising for HBCUs have been placed on the presidents of the institutions (Barrett, 2006; Gasman, 2000); however, the majority of HBCUs have a division or department of IA to coordinate the fundraising processes.

IA departments or divisions serve an important role in higher education and at HBCUs. IA or development can be different at each HBCU, but it is usually a functional area or office that is responsible for planning and executing fundraising efforts (Barrett, 2006; Carter, 2005). IA is also responsible for cultivating relationships with alumni, institutional development, community and public relations, marketing, and special events (Carter, 2005). The most common functional areas of an HBCU advancement department are: annual fund, major gifts, and capital campaign (Tindall, 2008).

There are different organizational structures within each IA division at HBCUs (Tindall, 2007, 2008; Williams, 2010). IA at HBCUs can vary from small departments to

large divisions and this depends on the institutional size and fundraising priorities (Tindall, 2008). It is suggested that HBCUs recruit fundraisers of color and who may have the HBCU experience so that they can be able to relate to diverse students and alumni (Bowman III, 2010; Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013).

Effective leadership and strategic planning can play a role in the organization of IA at HBCUs and the overall fundraising goals (Barrett, 2006; Gasman, 2000; Williams, 2010). HBCU presidents have to provide sufficient resources to the advancement divisions (Barrett, 2006) to support their organizations and strategic fundraising efforts. The leaders of HBCUs have to create an institutional culture of making fundraising a priority and a collaborative effort, which will lead to successful fundraising (Barrett, 2006). Overall, good leadership, a culture of fundraising, and a fundraising model that effectively engages alumni can play a large role in the survival of HBCUs (Barrett, 2006; Conwell, 2013; Gasman, 2000; Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013; Rivard, 2014).

### **Community College Foundations**

Community colleges in the U.S. have IA divisions or development offices which are generally referred to as the “foundation” or oversee what is called the “foundation.” A foundation is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organization or corporation that is also governed by a foundation board of trustees. Foundations help to generate private revenue for the public community colleges (Babitz, 2003) and support the funding of the college endowment (Carter, 2011). The IA or development offices coordinate the day-to-day operations of the college foundation. The college foundation plays a key role in

generating revenue for student scholarships and the long-term programmatic and capital goals of the college (Babitz, 2003).

Everyone who works to fundraise for the foundation should have a clear definition of the role they play in contributing to the foundation (Babitz, 2003). HBCCs have one to two individuals who are IA staff that are responsible for the fundraising activities and the foundation (Bass, 2003). According to the Coahoma Community College (2017) website, there is one foundation director and that person is responsible for “fundraising, public and donor relations; administrative and accounting and investments” (www.coahomacc.edu, para 2).

The success of a community college foundation is based on the collaborative relationships among the key stakeholders of the institution (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998). IA professionals at community colleges usually work with the foundation board of trustees to “develop and implement fundraising policies, programs, and strategies that benefit the institution” (Babitz, 2003, p. 8). As the economic climate in the U.S. puts more pressure on community colleges to seek out private funds, the foundation boards now have more responsibilities (Jones, 2010).

Foundation board members must be committed to the mission of the institution and knowledgeable about the strategic plans of the college and foundation (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998). One challenge that HBCUs face are finding board of trustee members who are committed to the fundraising process and advancement of the institution (Fields, 2001). In addition, foundation board members must be “willing to identify, cultivate, and



solicit potential donors” to help with the advancement of the institutions (Babitz, 2003, p.9; Carter, 2011).

HBCC foundation board members build relationships with people and businesses in the private sector with the hopes of receiving donations to fund the foundation. HBCC Presidents and IA professionals select the foundation board members with the expectation that the board members will use their own personal money to make financial donations to the foundations. President’s believe that foundation board members can serve the college as a resource or connecting the college with potential donors (Miller, 2013). Foundation board members can be alumni of the institutions they serve, local and state leaders, or leaders of local businesses or community organizations (Bass, 2003).

### **Endowments**

Fundraising is a high priority and contributes to the endowments at all American colleges and universities (Goldstein, 2005). Endowments at HBCUs are designed as foundations, trust funds, or charity funds. Endowments are the key to sustainability into the future (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013; Stuart, 2014). Endowments at minority-serving institutions, such as HBCCs, are considered to be low or just shrinking (Cohen, 2006; Drezner, 2008; Gasman, 2001; Stuart, 2014).

Lee (2009) asserted that public higher education institutions must “participate in fundraising activities and do everything possible to increase endowment assets” (p.144). One of the biggest challenges and issues facing HBCCs are fiscal problems and fundraising for the college endowment (Stuart, 2014). The funding process at a community college is tied to the local county, state, and federal processes (Benitez, 1998;

Gentile, 2009; Goldstein, 2005) and public funds are quickly declining (Stuart, 2014). It is critical for the HBCCs to become more strategic and rigorous with generating private revenue for the college endowment (Stuart, 2014).

Community colleges and HBCCs were recently founded in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and with the institutions being so young, their endowments tend to be lower. There is a significant relationship between the age of the institution and the number of top fundraising officers, and the final amount of the endowment (Tindall, 2007). HBCUs that have a rich history and strong brand are more likely to have a large endowment. HBCUs “with stronger endowments are more stable financially,” which helps enhance the campus programs and services and increase the student scholarships (Gasman & Bowman III, 2012, p.92; Stuart, 2014). Currently, Spelman College, Howard University, Hampton University, and Morehouse College have the largest endowments out of all the 105 public and private HBCUs (Anonymous, 2008; Gasman & Bowman III, 2012).

### **The Actors in the Community College**

There are many people who are responsible in the community college environment for spending their time and energy on generating additional revenue. The social exchange framework refers to everyone involved in the relationships as actors. Some of the actors who play a role in successful development of the colleges are: college presidents, IA professionals, foundations, faculty, staff, and alumni.

**President.** The community college president's role is to serve as the leader of the institution and be a representative of the college within the local community. Although, the president serves at the leader of the college, executing the role as the community

college president can be complex. The college president promotes the college mission and establishes the priorities within the college's strategic plan to help drive the mission forward (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998). The president may sometimes have to balance his or her own priorities and vision with the board of trustee members priorities (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998; Vaughn, 1986).

The community college president is the educational or academic leader of the college (Vaughn, 1986). The community college president creates the culture within the college and promotes the importance of academics at the college (Vaughn, 1986).

Although, the president does not execute the delivery of the curriculum, so he must have competent individuals in the vice president and faculty positions to ensure quality with the delivery of courses. The community college president serves as the educational leader and educating the internal and external community members of the strengths and needs of the college (Vaughn, 1986). This part of the president's role of educating outside constituents is extremely important to sustainability and the advancement of the college (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998).

The community college president's role in institutional advancement or development is quite unique. The president is the lead administrator whom works collaboratively with internal and external community members to move the college priorities forward (Vaughn, 1986). The president's efforts to building relationships with potential donors is important to how the internal and external community members view the president as a fundraiser (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998). Community college presidents

view their role as the leader of fundraising very differently: they view themselves as the "face" of the institution (Miller, 2013).

Goodman (2015) found that the majority of community college presidents at minority serving institutions spend 5 to 20 hours per week on fundraising. Some president's work to get other college community members involved with the fundraising perspective by setting the expectation that everyone in the college community is responsible in the marketing of the college. President's need to prioritize the amount of time they spend on fundraising (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998; Goodman, 2015), such as thinking strategically, connecting with potential donors, and supporting the fundraising team in their efforts to fundraise for the college.

**Institutional advancement professionals.** The IA professionals are the individuals in the college community who are responsible for upholding the college's mission and executing the actions steps to help contribute to the college's goals within the strategic plan (Worth & Asp II, 1994). The lead IA professional is usually a member of the president's cabinet and reports directly to the president (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998; Underwood & Hammons, 1999; Worth, 2002; Worth & Asp II, 1994).

IA professionals at community colleges are responsible for developing goals that will advance the institution in the community. The IA professionals need strong leadership abilities because they play a key role in engaging alumni and various internal and external community members (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998). The HBCC IA professionals engage in on-going social exchanges with alumni with the intentions of generating financial contributions for the college foundation.

IA is about raising funds and sustainability in the future (Fields, 2001). Fields (2001) declares that HBCUs “that fail to get their development houses in order won’t survive” in the future (p. 39). HBCUs are using more advancement models to structure the generation of funds through various fundraising opportunities (Fields, 2001). New development models for the advancement of the higher education institutions include relationship building and image building (Fields, 2001). Over the past decade, HBCUs have realized the value in giving from campus community members for the advancement of their institutions. Educating current HBCC students on philanthropy and the “obligation to give back,” can develop a new population of alumni who give (Fields, 2001, p. 39; Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013).

Good leadership within the IA offices is needed to start the IA process and to decrease any tensions among other entities that may be competing for financial contributions (Fields, 2001). HBCC IA offices consist of a small number of fundraisers, due to the size of the college and alumni base. Overall, HBCUs are especially in need of fundraisers of color to help engage the high number of alumni of color (Bowman, III, 2010). Black development officers with years of experience are hard to find, and so some HBCUs have had to nurture new development officers from within their institutions (Fields, 2001).

**Alumni.** According to Herbin, Dittman, Herbert, and Ebben (2006), “alumni in community colleges are the most underutilized resource and untapped revenue stream” (p. 28). Community college alumni are usually engaged through direct fundraising and alumni board participation (Herbin et al., 2006). College alumni typically give because of

their underlying motivations and there are a variety of reasons why alumni get motivated to donate to their alma mater.

Some alumni view themselves as donors of education facilities and they want to make a difference in the lives of students. According to Skari (2011), with her study on characteristics of alumni who give to community colleges, the majority of individuals who give are White Caucasian females, who are between the ages of 50 and 59 years old. Moreover, educational level and income played a large role in alumni motivations to donate to their alma maters (Skari, 2011).

Alumni support and financial donations can be viewed as the key to successful fundraising at many colleges and universities (Gasman, 2013). Alumni support can also be volunteering at events and bringing positive awareness to the institutions through the social exchanges they have with people in the community. Alumni of colleges and universities usually receive calls from their alma maters asking them to donate money to the institution. Alumni are more motivated to provide financial support to their alma maters if they have had a great collegiate experience at the institution they attended (Sun, Hoffman, & Grady, 2007) or if they understand how philanthropy can be important for the survival of an educational institution.

Harrison (1995) found that colleges and universities that invest in their alumni activities see a great significance on the success of participation from alumni. College and universities are also investing in their current students and making sure that they have an enjoyable college experience, thus increasing the probability of those students donating money after they graduate and making fundraising a success for the institution

(Pumerantz, 2005). Community colleges are beginning to see that value in alumni giving and have started to encourage alumni to get involved (Babitz, 2003).

**Black college alumni.** Black alumni have been interviewed (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013) and there are alumni who believe it is important to give back to their alma maters. Black alumni have given back through financial donations and offering their services to their alma maters. There is a notion that Black alumni believe when they provide money to their alma maters that they are helping young students. Blacks believe that when they give back, they are helping to “lift up the race” (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013, p.22). However, some Black alumni still feel uncomfortable with donating money to their alma maters due to a lack of trust in public institutions. Many Black alumni believe that if they provide money to their alma mater, then the money will not be used for the “right” things (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013, p. 97).

There are a few best practices or approaches to engage Black alumni in the higher education fundraising process. The most attractive reason for Black alumni to donate to their alma mater is in regard to racial uplift (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013). If alumni believe that their donation will be used to help a current Black student, then they are more inclined to provide funds to the cause. Alumni who had higher levels of church involvement, are more likely to be academic donors (Hunter, Jones, & Boger, 1999). Black alumni do not mind donating to their alma mater, they just have to be asked by the institutions they attended (Hunter, Jones, & Boger, 1999).

## **Summary**

This chapter examines the literature relevant to understanding IA at HBCCs. Social exchange theory is used as a lens to explore IA at HBCCs, because the basic concepts have all the elements to establishing a long lasting professional relationship between institutional advancement professionals and alumni. This chapter presented relevant literature on community colleges, HBCCs, institutional advancement at HBCUs, community college foundations and endowments, and the actors who are involved in the fundraising at HBCCs. In Chapter three, I will provide an overview and purpose of the research. I will describe the research design and describe the methods that will be used to collect and analyze data. I will also address trustworthiness and any ethical considerations.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

In this chapter, I will describe the methods and design of the study. I will discuss multiple case study research and why it is the best strategy of inquiry to explore this research topic. I have conducted a multiple case study on Institutional Advancement (IA) at historically Black community colleges (HBCCs). The goal of my research was to better understand IA at HBCCs through the perceptions of HBCC IA professionals; and therefore, the research phenomenon or quintain will be IA at HBCCs (Stake, 2006).

Using Social exchange theory, a framework that focuses on the interaction of two actors (Emerson, 1976), understanding the interactions of HBCC IA professionals and HBCC alumni will be the focus of the study. I used the social exchange theoretical framework as a lens to answer my research questions. I collected data using pertinent documentation, interviews, and my researcher's journal to gain an in-depth understanding of IA at HBCCs and the fundraising processes at the community colleges.

I will describe the procedures that I used for the multiple case study data collection and analysis. I used a cross-case analysis to help me interpret the data collected from the IA professionals at the HBCCs. The cross-case analysis allowed me to identify the similarities and differences of the three HBCCs (Stake, 2006). Furthermore, the cross-case analysis helped me gain an in-depth understanding of IA at HBCCs and answer the research questions about the quintain (Stake, 2006). In a multiple case study, the quintain binds the cases and helps highlight the particular details of each case (Stake, 2006),

therefore, recognizing how the three community colleges relate to one another and helping us to better understand the uniqueness of IA at each HBCC.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this multiple case study is to investigate and understand the quintain: IA at HBCCs from the perspectives of IA professionals. For the purposes of this study, IA is described as the functional area that coordinates fundraising activities, social exchanges with alumni, and other strategies to generate private funds to contribute to the college, college foundation, or endowment. I conducted this multiple case study to understand IA at HBCCs, fundraising at HBCCs, and how the IA professionals engage alumni in the giving process at the community colleges. The data has enabled me to gain a better understanding of IA at an HBCC and to explore some of the challenges of engaging alumni in the fundraising process at a community college.

I gathered and analyzed information from the HBCC IA professionals in order to help my readers understand the realities of the social exchanges or interactions between IA professionals and alumni. There is little known about IA at HBCCs (Morgan, 2007; Stake, 2006) and community college fundraising at minority serving institutions (Goodman, 2015). Additionally, there is a lack of scholarly research on minority serving institutions (Nguyen et al., 2015). This case study will provide a small glimpse into the fundraising and alumni giving processes at HBCCs and add to the current literature on fundraising at HBCUs.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions will help me to further understand IA, fundraising, and alumni giving at historically Black community colleges:

1. What is Institutional Advancement at HBCCs?
2. What are the fundraising activities and strategies used by the HBCC Institutional Advancement professionals to engage alumni in giving to the community college?
3. How do Institutional Advancement professionals at HBCCs perceive their social exchanges with alumni?
4. How does social exchange theory help us to understand Institutional Advancement at HBCCs?
  - a. What do the Institutional Advancement professionals describe as challenges of fundraising at HBCCs?
  - b. How does trust play a role in the Institutional Advancement fundraising at HBCCs?
  - c. What mutual benefits result from the social exchanges between Institutional Advancement professionals and alumni?

## **Research Design**

Qualitative research can be defined as “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2012). I have used qualitative research methods to help me to explore IA at HBCCs and the fundraising strategies used by IA professionals. Qualitative research helped me better understand IA at the HBCCs, through the eyes of the four participants and how they make

meaning of their work in IA. Qualitative research enables a researcher to become a key instrument in the process through interviewing participants and becoming a participant observer (Creswell, 2007). Multiple sources of data can also be used in qualitative research to help the researcher better understand the meaning of what the participants describe (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 2006).

My philosophical worldview will give readers some insight into why I chose the qualitative approach for my study (Creswell, 2012). Philosophical worldviews are the beliefs that I have about the world as a researcher and my beliefs are based on my past life and research experiences (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 1995). Therefore, I see myself as a social constructivist and this worldview has influenced my qualitative research approach. As a social constructivist, I used a qualitative research approach to create meaning as a result of my interactions with the study participants in their own campus environment at an HBCC (Creswell, 2012).

My goal as a constructivist was to gather information to understand the experiences of the research participants and to interpret their experiences into meaning that could be understood by others (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 1995). In addition, the aim of research is to “construct a clearer reality” of the information that will be provided from the people who know most about the IA at HBCCs (Stake, 1995, p. 101). The HBCC IA professionals know the most about their work experiences, and particularly their experiences with engaging internal and external community members, including HBCC alumni in the giving processes. My role as a constructivist was to become an interpreter

(Stake, 1995) and I was able to generate meaning from the data that I collected during the research process (Creswell, 2012).

### **Case Study Method**

The qualitative strategy of inquiry that was used is case study. A case study is “the study of the particularity and complexity...coming to understand...activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p.xi). The rationale for using case study methods as the strategy of inquiry is because I knew I would gain an in-depth understanding of the quintain (Stake, 2006), IA at HBCCs. Case study research helped me focus on the perceptions of IA professionals who work at HBCCs and helped me to understand the social interactions they may have with HBCC alumni to engage them in the fundraising processes. This type of research is a way to identify the unique and common things about the HBCCs and the IA professionals’ experiences (Stake, 1995).

I used this particular qualitative strategy of inquiry because this approach supports the use of “ordinary” data collection procedures that helped me gather information from the individuals who understand IA at HBCCs (Stake, 1995, p. 49). The case study approach demands the selection of the “best” data sources to better understand the case (Stake, 1995, p. 95). A case study approach has given me some insight to what fundraising strategies are used by the IA professionals to engage all internal and external community members in giving process at the community colleges. A case study approach helped me to interpret the social exchanges with HBCC alumni that are described by the HBCC IA professionals. Moreover, this qualitative approach helped me to make meaning of the advancement professionals’ social exchanges that result in anticipated rewards.

A collective case study is a multiple case study that looks at one or more instrumental cases; and therefore, “each case is approached as a single inquiry” (Stake, 1995, p.2). My intentions were to conduct a multiple case study design (Stake, 2006) to learn more about the quintain, which is the phenomenon being studied, so I could better understand IA at HBCCs (Stake, 1995; 2006). This multiple case study approach was used to study IA at HBCCs, because it demanded me as the researcher to look at the common and unique insights of each case being studied.

To ensure strength within the case study, it was important to choose multiple cases with the intention to learn about the quintain (Stake, 1995). Variety in the cases is a priority and helped me to understand IA at HBCCs (Stake, 1995). HBCCs have been ignored by many academic researchers (Nguyen et al., 2015), and it is necessary for new research to get an in-depth view of HBCCs and how the institutions are making a significant contribution to American higher education.

### **Case Selection**

In this case study, purposeful sampling was used to help me identify the cases, which helped me to understand the problem of the study from the point of view of the IA professionals who have experience with the problem (Creswell, 2012). I employed the maximum variation sampling technique to choose the cases in this study. The use of a maximum variation sampling for case selection was not the highest priority but having a variety of cases was important and a great opportunity to learn more about the quintain (Stake, 1995). The cases were picked based on my review of the strategic plan of each HBCC: Each community college’s strategic plan addresses goals for their IA division or

office. There appeared to be efforts at each HBCC to enhance IA, socially engage alumni, and increase alternative sources of revenue. Each case was picked with a purpose, but the variation of each institution helped me to get an in-depth understanding of the quintain (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 2006).

I initially accessed a full list of HBCUs on the United States Department of Education's "White House Initiatives on Historically Black Colleges and Universities" website (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). I reviewed the entire list of HBCUs and identified eleven public 2-year colleges. I made the decision to pick cases that could help me learn more about IA at HBCCs (Stake, 1995). I was able to access some of the community college IA division or office webpages and gather contact information of current advancement staff.

Although each case was studied in its own context, each case was selected based on the binding concept, which is a way to place parameters on the cases based on the quintain in order to stay focused on the scope of the research (Stake, 2006). Thus, each case was in relation to one another because each case has an IA division or office that has developed goals to increase private revenue and engage alumni in that process. I picked three HBCCs to become cases in this case study: Trenholm State Community College (TSCC) in Montgomery, Alabama; Coahoma Community College (CCC) in Clarksdale, Mississippi; and St. Phillip's College (St. PC) in San Antonio, Texas.

TSCC was selected because the strategic plan listed the goal of developing outreach programs and business partnerships to sustain institutional growth, which relationship building is one of the responsibilities of IA. CCC was selected because the

strategic plan listed the initiation of new programs to secure and sustain federal, state, and local funding. In addition, one of CCCs main objectives within the strategic plans is to enhance IA. St. PC was selected because the strategic plan documented the strengthening of communication with internal and external stakeholders. St. PC developed plans to survey all stakeholders to gain a better understanding of how to maximize the communication.

Each case is relevant to the quintain of understanding IA at HBCCs, and the variety of each case was an opportunity to help me understand the quintain (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 2006). The maximum variation sampling technique was used to choose the three cases which helped me to identify both common themes and differences (Creswell, 2012). My rationale for only picking three cases for the case study is because three colleges represents 25% of all the public HBCCs in the United States. The selection of cases was purposeful, and I believe studying the three cases captured the details necessary to understand IA at HBCC. Additionally, the careful selection of the variety of cases provided “information rich” data highlighting the uniqueness of IA at HBCCs (Palinkas et al., 2015, p. 7; Stake, 2006).

### **Participant Selection**

Criterion sampling was the technique used to identify IA professionals who work at the three HBCCs (Creswell, 2012). My role as the researcher was to gain a better understanding of IA and fundraising at the HBCCs. Each participant will meet the criteria of being a college administrator or professional who currently works in an IA division or office at an HBCC. The participants could be in any entry-level to senior-level



advancement position, but they had to be one of the front-line fundraisers (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013) of the community college. The advancement professionals are the actors (Stake, 1995) who have a role in the relationship building and fundraising processes at an HBCC. I interviewed four participants in total and the interviews took place over the telephone.

### **Data Collection**

Qualitative case study research encourages the researcher to collect data from multiple sources (Creswell, 2012; Maxwell, 2013). I developed a formal protocol to use as a guide for collecting, analyzing, and displaying the case study report (Stake, 1995). Moreover, I developed a case study data collection protocol to help conduct a quality case study.

Interviews, observations, and documentation review were the recommended data sources to use in a case study design (Stake, 1995). The use of multiple data sources in my research of HBCCs is essential to the process of triangulation and my ultimate goal of conducting a case study was “to construct a clearer reality” of the quintain, while ensuring the validity of the data gathered (Stake, 1995, p. 101). Thus, each data source supports and confirms the findings and enhances the overall quality of the case study of IA at HBCCs.

I used only two of the data sources recommended by Stake (1995): Interviews and documentation review. Interviewing is the primary way to gaining more knowledge of the HBCC IA professionals’ realities (Stake, 1995). Documentation review is critical for my research, because the decisions I made during the case selection were based from each of

the community college's strategic plan. The review of the college strategic plans as an opportunity to learn more about the goals and efforts of each IA division or office. Although observations could have increased my understanding (Stake, 1995) of IA at HBCC, I did not have the opportunity to travel with the research participants to IA events. Moreover, observations of the HBCC advancement professionals will not be necessary, because observations will not help me answer the research questions. I used my researcher's journal as the third data source for this case study as a way of tracking the progress of the study (Stake, 1995).

### **Institutional Review Board**

Before the collection of any data, I submitted submit a research proposal to the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to seek approval for data collection for my study. In addition, I submitted a research proposal to the Coahoma Community and St. Phillip's College's Institutional Review Board, because it is a requirement for anyone who is conducting research on their campuses. I initially sent e-mails to all the HBCC college president's asking them to recommend someone on their campus and a professional whom fit the study participant criteria (see Appendix A). After I received the names of the various IA professionals at the HBCCs, I began to make initial contact with the potential participants via electronic mail. I conducted follow-up e-mails and telephone calls to confirm interest and participation in the study (Seidman, 2006). With IRB approval from the three HBCCs, I was approved by the Rowan University IRB to conduct my study. The IRB approval allowed the data collection process to commence in May 2017.

The final case study participants were given a research study consent form to read and confirm their understanding of the purpose and participation in the study (see Appendix B). It was important that the HBCC IA professionals understood the details of the case study and know that their commitment to the study was voluntary.

## **Interviews**

The first stage of data collection were semi-structured interviews with the four case study participants. Conducting interviews with the participants informed me about the realities of the events that the participants have experienced in IA at HBCCs (Stake, 1995). Therefore, the interviews provided insight into the phenomena through the eyes of the participants. The purpose of the interviews with the HBCC IA professionals were to “obtain the descriptions and interpretations” from each participant (Stake, 1995, p.64). During the interviews, I facilitated the conversation by using a semi-structured interview protocol that was prepared ahead of time and tested in a pilot study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Stake, 1995). The interviews were semi-structured to provide me with a solid plan that was used to guide the conversation with the IA professionals (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). This became especially important during the phone interview Coahoma Community College. The semi-structured instrument helped me to stay on track while interviewing both participants at the same time.

The semi-structured interviews created an environment of freedom for the participants to express their experience with IA at the HBCCs (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The semi-structured interview protocol was a list of specific questions that was developed to collect data with the ultimate goal of understanding the quintain (Cohen & Crabtree,

2006; Stake, 2006) and answering the overall research questions. I was able to collect data through three 60 to 90 minutes telephone interview with the participants (Creswell, 2012; Mohd-Noor, 2008; Stake, 2006).

I conducted three interviews over the telephone with the IA professionals. The interviews were held while each participant was in their natural work environment, which may have created some sense of comfort for them. The comfort level of participants was critical, because it was important for the participants to open up and provide in-depth insights about IA at HBCCs. With the permission of each participant, I was able to use a digital tape recorder during the interviews to help support the accuracy of the data provided from the interviews (Stake, 1995).

### **Instrumentation**

The primary instrument that was used in this study was a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix C). The semi-structured interview protocol was developed to gather information to answer the research questions. The interview protocol was developed with the intentions of gaining a better understanding of IA at HBCCs. The interview protocol has questions that elicited information about some of the fundraising challenges that HBCCs face. Thus, the protocol served as a tool to have the HBCC IA professionals share their stories of their work to advance their campuses and enhance the student opportunities on campus. Stake (2010) declares there is an opportunity for qualitative researchers to advocate for the underrepresented by sharing their stories. The interview protocol was the tool used to gain insight to IA at HBCC and help tell their

stories and write a positive narrative of HBCUs (Gasman & Commodore, 2014; Stake, 2010).

**Pilot study.** The draft of the interview protocol was piloted in the fall of 2016. I interviewed a small group of IA professionals who work within a community college or HBCU setting. The pilot study participants were asked to participate in an interview via electronic mail (e-mail). They were given a consent form to inform them of the details of their voluntary participation in the pilot study. I conducted 45-60 minutes interviews and the participants answered the questions from the interview protocol. The interviews were face-to-face on the participants' respective campuses or over the telephone. The pilot study was coordinated to help make the questions in the interview protocol clear and reliable. The feedback from the pilot study participants was taken into consideration. Consequently, changes were made to the interview protocol.

### **Documentation**

I collected pertinent documentation, via the college websites, that gave me the opportunity to learn more about IA at HBCCs and the social exchanges between the advancement professionals and alumni (Stake, 1995; Stake, 2006). Therefore, the collection of important documents, such as the Quality Enhancement Plan (Q.E.P.) and strategic plan was used to better understand if the HBCCs have documented any goals of engagement with alumni or enhancing the fundraising activities. The strategic plan is a document that provides an opportunity for the college community to make investments to help grow the institution and aim for sustainability (Cantey, Bland, Mack, & Joy-Davis, 2011). I also collected IA newsletters to gather more information on fundraising events,

list of donors, and other strategies used to reach alumni. The documentation was used for triangulation with the other data sources and used in the case study, which enhanced the validity of this case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Mohd-Noor, 2008; Stake, 2006).

### **Researcher's Journal**

I used my researcher's journal as a data source to help me explore IA professionals at HBCCs. My goal was to have a better understanding of what IA is at an HBCC. Using the journal helped me build interpretations about the context of an IA office at a HBCC (Stake, 1995; Stake 2006). The research journal case study notes will be used to complement the data collected from the interviews and relevant documentation.

I kept the case notes in an electronic researcher's journal to document my thoughts and observations from my experiences in the field (Janesick, 1999). In addition, the research journal was used to document the entire case study process and any changes that I have made to the study over-time. The journal writing served as an opportunity for time to reflect on the study and helped me to use my writing as a tool to make sense of the study (Janesick, 1999).

I handwrote and uses the voice command option to dictate the case study notes in my electronic researcher's journal. I transferred all the case notes to the qualitative database to properly store it before the data analysis process. It was slightly challenging to take notes during the interviews, so I wrote my observations and thoughts in my research's journal immediately after an interview session (Stake, 1995). All information

from any documents were entered into the NVivo 11 database during the data collection process.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis began at the start of data collection. After completion of the three interviews, I used Rev.com, a professional transcription service to transcribe all the digital recordings from the interviews. All the data collected from interviews, important documentation, and the researcher's journal were entered into a Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) and this helped keep the three data sources organized (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Saldana, 2009; Stake, 1995). The software that I used is the NVivo 11. The NVivo 11 is a comprehensive data software database and allowed any unstructured data to be uploaded for analysis. Using a case study database helped me to keep the data I collect organized and the use of a database increases the reliability of the case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995).

**Data analysis: Step one.** This is a case study of IA at HBCCs and my goal was to understand the quintain (Stake, 2006). The quintain in this case study is IA at HBCCs. The very first step in assisting with the data analysis process was to bind the cases together with the quintain (Stake, 2006). The cases were bounded together through the use of the social exchange theoretical framework and the research questions related to IA at HBCCs. As the researcher, I documented the entire plan of data collection and data analysis processes on *Worksheet #1: A Graphic Design of a Multiple Case Study* (Stake, 2006). This graphic was used to help me complete many of the sequential data analysis worksheets (see Appendix D).

**Data analysis: Step two.** The data from the interviews transcripts, documents, and researcher's journal was coded manually using the *In Vivo* method (Saldana, 2009). The *In Vivo* method was the first cycle of coding and this allowed me to capture the meaning of the words directly from the data (Saldana, 2009). I entered the codes from the interview transcripts, notes from the documents collected, and field notes from the researcher's journal into NVivo 11. The coding method that was used during the second cycle was *Themeing the Data* method (Saldana, 2009), which helped me to develop themes from the first cycle of codes.

I used the "winnowing" method with the codes gathered from the data of IA at HBCCs. Winnowing is a qualitative research data analysis strategy that will help me to reduce the codes into smaller amounts of overarching themes (Creswell, 2012; Saldana, 2009). Winnowing data and codes on IA on HBCCs helped me to develop a list of overarching themes to enter into the data analysis *Worksheet #2: The Themes of the Multicase Study* (Stake, 2006).

I will use the data analysis *Worksheet #2: The Themes of the Multicase Study* (Stake, 2006) to outline the themes of the quintain. The themes were related to the research questions that had already been developed. The themes in worksheet #2 will be used to gather primary information about the IA at HBCCs (Stake, 2006).

**Data analysis: Step three.** I conducted a thorough read through of all the data and took notes of any thoughts I had of the final case reports (Stake, 2006). I used this information to complete *Worksheet #3: Analyst's Notes While Reading the HBCC Case Report* for each of the HBCCs in the study (Stake, 2006). The use of worksheet #3 in the



data analysis helped me to identify the uniqueness of each HBCC and the overall findings of the study (Stake, 2006). Additionally, I was able to analyze each case individually and start the preparations for the cross-case analysis (Stake, 2006). This is the reductive stage of data analysis (Stake, 2006). Therefore, worksheet #3 highlighted the particular insights of each HBCC and helped me to get an in-depth understanding of each HBCC (Stake, 2006).

**Data analysis: Cross-case analysis.** The final step of data analysis was a cross-case synthesis of the HBCCs; this approach is very strategic and organized, and the approach was used to better understand each case (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 2006). My rationale for using the cross-case analysis was to identify similarities and differences among each of the HBCCs (Stake, 2006). The use of a cross-case analysis in this multiple case study of HBCCs helped me gather information to better understand IA at HBCCs (Stake, 2006). The cross-case data analysis approach used a few pre-designed matrices to help analyze each case before completing the final case report.

In the first step of the cross-case analysis, I completed *Worksheet #4: Ratings of Expected Utility of Each HBCC for Each Theme* (Stake, 2006). I listed each of the HBCCs and add the existing themes of the case study to this worksheet. During my thorough review of each case I developed additional themes; however, most of the themes were pulled from worksheet #2. I used worksheet #4 to rank each of the three HBCC IA offices. The cases were ranked on a low, medium, and high scale, so that I was able to determine the usefulness of each case that will help me to understand IA at

HBCCs (Stake, 2006). I used worksheet #4 to make connections between the three cases and see if the findings were relevant to the themes (Stake, 2006).

The next step in the cross-case analysis was to the use of *Worksheet #5: A Matrix for Generating Theme-Based Assertions* (Stake, 2006). Worksheet #5 was used to get an in-depth look of each IA office at an HBCC. I used this particular matrix to rate each of the findings in relation to the themes. I used both worksheet #2 and #3 at this point in the data analysis of the HBCCs, which helped me complete worksheet #5 and generate theme related assertions of each case (Stake, 2006).

I created finding strips by printing out the list of findings from NVivo 11 and this was used to outline the findings from each case (Stake, 2006). The finding strips helped me to fully complete worksheet #5, ranking the findings with a low, middle, or high importance to the research themes (Stake, 2006). The finding strips and worksheet #5 was used to help me understand the quintain and draw up assertions of each HBCC (Stake, 2006). The ultimate goal was to use the findings of the cases and make claims that assisted me with better understanding the quintain, IA at HBCCs, and to answer the research questions.

I conducted this case study research on IA at HBCCs “to gain understanding of that particular entity as it is situated” (Stake, 2006, p. 40). Therefore, my job as the researcher was to interpret the meaning of the participants’ description of the quintain and understand the quintain depending on the specific context of each case. Cross-case analysis gave me the opportunity to understand the differences and common themes among each of the three HBCCs, and to make claims about each case to better understand

the overall research problem (Stake, 2006). In order to draft up final assertions, I used *Worksheet #6: Multicase Assertions for the Final Case Report* (Stake, 2006). The data entered in worksheet #6 came as a result of following the previous cross-case data analysis procedures. The steps that were taken to get to worksheet #6 made it easier to produce a quality cross-case report. Worksheet #6 displayed the assertions that helped me and will help the readers of this case study better understand the quintain (Stake, 2006).

### **Validity**

This case study research followed the appropriate qualitative case study procedures to ensure validity. As a novice qualitative researcher, I used strategies that demonstrated the standards of rigor. This case study will be able to ensure trustworthiness, due to my use of a rigorous qualitative case study protocol (Stake, 1995; Yazan, 2015). The validity of this research will be explained through the concepts of trustworthiness and credibility.

**Trustworthiness.** To ensure the research findings are trustworthy, I used one of the four strategies of triangulation (Baxter & Jack, 2008). I used the primary strategy, data source triangulation, to gain a better understanding of the realities of IA at HBCCs (Golafshani, 2003; Stake, 1995; Yazan, 2015). The collection of three sources, including interviews, documentation, and a research journal enhanced the quality of the data and enable me to converge all the findings (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The convergence of all the findings will support a thorough cross-case analysis (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 2006).

**Credibility.** This case study was concerned with establishing credibility and did this by using specific qualitative procedures to ensure the data is believable (Stake,

1995). As a novice researcher, I ensured the research questions were clearly written to aid in the design of the study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The use of case study protocols and procedures assisted me with the goal of obtaining the "most credible interpretation or knowledge of the cases" (Yazan, 2015, p. 147). Purposeful sampling was used to find the most appropriate HBCCs to be used as cases and bind the case study with intentions of gathering specific rich data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). An electronic database (i.e. NVivo 11), researcher's journal, and case study protocol were used to establish credibility. Data that is systematically managed with the use of a database helped organize all data sources in one central location, which can increase credibility (Stake, 1995; Yazan, 2015).

Case study procedures can help an external auditor with potentially repeating the study and ending up with the same conclusions. It is important to document procedures, which can serve as a guide for any researcher. My research decisions and case study procedures were tracked in my researcher's journal. The case study plans and procedures were carefully documented. The plans are critical to conducting a multiple-case study and can help ensure credibility during the data analysis process (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995). Following the case study procedures helped me to increase the credibility of the multiple case studies on IA at HBCCs.

**Generalizability.** My study on IA at HBCCs is grounded in social exchange theory. As the researcher, I may be able to develop some generalizations after the interpretation of data (Stake, 1995). However, this multiple case study will focus more on the particulars of each of the community colleges rather than being able to generalize the findings (Stake, 2006). The ultimate goal was to understand the quintain, IA at HBCCs.

This study of IA at HBCCs is not meant to be a representation for cases on HBCCs (Stake, 2006). Future readers of this study will have the choice to make generalizations about the assertions that I made about my understanding of IA at HBCCs (Stake, 2006). This study's findings may be used at the discretion of another reader or researcher on future related research (Stake, 1995, 2006).

### **Ethical Considerations**

As a novice researcher, it is a great idea to be knowledgeable about how to conduct an ethical research and how to treat participants during the time one has to work with them. I have completed the *Protection of Human Research Subjects* course through The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), which discussed ethics in research, this history of the treatment of human research subjects and what steps that I as a researcher need to take to treat my study participants with respect. I have developed the steps to take to protect the participants, such as creating pseudonyms for the IA professionals, which was a great idea because of the small number of staff within each case in this study.

I submitted a research proposal to the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) about my qualitative study and received approval from IRB before I was able to enter the field to collect data. In addition, I submitted a research proposal to the Coahoma Community College and St. Phillip's College to conduct research at their campus. I also worked on my own personal researcher bias by making sure that my bias did not play a role in how I interpreted the data. I acknowledged my biases and practice being reflective through the use of my researcher's journal (Stake, 1995).

## **Summary**

The third chapter of this dissertation described the methodology for conducting a case study. I designed this qualitative study to gain a better understanding of IA at HBCCs. The chapter included the research design, description of the case study methodological approach, and how cases were selected. In addition, the data collection and analysis procedures were described. The case study design discussed in this chapter allowed me to gather pertinent data to answer the research questions on HBCC IA and how the IA professionals engage the alumni in the fundraising process.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Presentation of Findings**

The purpose of this study was to understand institutional advancement (IA) at historically Black community colleges (HBCCs), especially understanding the strategies that advancement professionals at HBCCs use engage the alumni in the fundraising process. The study used a qualitative case study design using an in-depth interview protocol. Study participants were professional staff who currently work in IA or development at an HBCC. The intent of this chapter is to present the findings of this study. The data from this study were collected from three separate cases.

### **Research Questions**

The questions that guided this case study were developed to bind the three cases in the study and to better understand the quintain (Stake, 2006). The research questions that guided the study on IA at HBCCs are as follows:

1. What is Institutional Advancement at HBCCs?
2. What are the fundraising activities and strategies used by HBCC Institutional Advancement professionals to engage alumni in giving to the community college?
3. How do Institutional Advancement professionals at HBCCs perceive their social exchanges with alumni?
4. How does social exchange theory help us to understand Institutional Advancement at HBCCs?
  - a. What do the Institutional Advancement professionals describe as challenges of fundraising at HBCCs?

- b. How does trust play a role in the Institutional Advancement fundraising at HBCCs?
- c. What mutual benefits result from the social exchanges between Institutional Advancement professionals and alumni?

### Summary of Cases

The cases picked for this study are three different HBCCs: Case 1: Trenholm State Community College in Montgomery, Alabama; Case 2: Coahoma Community College in Clarksdale, Mississippi; and Case 3: St. Philip's College in San Antonio, Texas. Each of the colleges have an IA office or division. Table 1 provides an overview of each of the cases.

Table 1

#### *Historically Black Community College Demographics*

	Case 1 Trenholm	Case 2 Coahoma	Case 3 St. Philip's
Institution founded	1966	1949	1898
Location of the College	Urban	Rural	Urban
Single campus or Larger system	System	Single	System
IA Office/Division	Yes	Yes	Yes
Official Alumni Association	No	Yes	No



The four participants in this study are all professional staff who work in the division or office that is primarily responsible for the advancement of the college, public relations, grants, and fundraising. I interviewed the four participants and a pseudonym was selected for each participant. Table 2 presents the participant demographics.

Table 2

*HBCC Institutional Advancement Professionals*

Name	Case	Official Title	Size of IA Office	Years in IA
Patricia	Trenholm	Director of Institutional Research and Advancement	3	10
Sheryl	Coahoma	Director Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation Liaison	13	12
Carol	Coahoma	Coordinator of Federal Programs	13	12
Richelle	St. Philip's	Director of Institutional Advancement	5	10

**Case 1: Trenholm State Community College**

Trenholm State Community College is an HBCC. It was founded in 1966 and is located in an urban setting in Montgomery, Alabama. The college is a part of a larger community college system: the Alabama Community College system. Trenholm has several campuses: a main campus and satellite campuses. The overall mission of the college is to “provide comprehensive and accessible educational opportunities” to the

community (Trenholm State Mission, 2017). Currently, the college enrollment is: 66% Black, 30% White, 2% Asian, and 2% Other.

### **Institutional Advancement at Trenholm**

The office of Institutional Research and Advancement is a small office of three people who work together to advance the goals of the college. The primary responsibility of the office is related to institutional research and reporting. The director spends time coordinating the goal planning of the various offices at the college to reach the overall strategic plan goals of the college. The director is responsible for maintaining college data for federal reporting purposes and any institutional effectiveness processes including the reaffirmation process for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACCO). The office is also responsible for writing grant proposals to support curriculum programs. The director leads the advancement office and is one of the president's cabinet members.

The advancement priority of this office is to raise money for student scholarships. The director of the office serves as the executive director of the college's foundation. Patricia stated that the goal of the Trenholm foundation is to support "the mission of the college by trying to provide thousands of students [scholarships] or also provide funding to assist the college in any way that it can't use state or federal funds" (personal communication, May 17, 2017).

The president leads the college in executing the college's strategic plans and allows the cabinet members the freedom to accomplish their individual office goals. As described by Patricia, the president's role in fundraising is to "help develop those

relationships with external [stakeholders] to be able to successfully solicit funds” (personal communication, May 17, 2017). The president has a “very easy going” leadership style and has given the IA director the freedom to execute the college advancement office goals. The president has not set any specific fundraising number for the IA office or foundation, but he expects the IA office to make ethical decisions and raise money annually.

### **Relationship Building**

One of the IA fundraising strategies is relationship building with various internal and external community members. This is a high priority for the college and Patricia and her colleagues. Building relationships with the internal and external community is important to the successful growth of the college. Building relationships with the community creates awareness and lets the community know the goals of the college. Relationship building is important because it allows the IA office to discover the interests of the internal and external community members. Moreover, building relationships creates opportunities for the IA office to ask interested community members for donations, which helps the IA office meet the office goal of generating private gifts (Trenholm State Community College Strategic Plan, 2017).

Patricia explained how relationship building is important: “even if I have added a new friend, it’s a win...it’s not just about fundraising money, it’s also about friend-raising” (personal communication, May 17, 2017). This comment is valuable because it speaks to the higher education fundraising strategy of “friend-raising,” which is an important strategy to this college’s advancement into the future. Patricia described friend-

raising as marketing for the college and a way to interact with internal and external stakeholders. Friend-raising is critical for the college, because the interactions can lead to an opportunity for the college to ask for donations from the stakeholders. The college plans various events to engage the community and meet new friends of the institution.

Patricia's fundraising responsibilities are about 30 % of her job; she works with the college foundation to plan and execute fundraising events. Regarding building relationships with alumni and people in the community, Patricia explained that, "it's important to stay in contact with them and build relationships with them, bringing the events where they come back to your institution" (personal communication, May 17, 2017). Bringing people back to the college campus for events, allows the visitors to see the growth in the physical structures and student body. In addition, community members can learn the needs of the college as they are speaking to college representatives at the events. This IA office plans annual events to get current employees, retirees, and friends of the college to come back to the campus.

Michele is the director of development and her primary responsibilities are to help the office with collaborating with the college foundation and planning fundraising events. Some of the large events include: the annual college gala, Crawfish Boil casual dinner party, a Louisiana-themed soiree, and other casual events. There is also the annual fundraising campaign in which college employees are encouraged to donate money to the college foundation.

**Alumni outreach.** Alumni at this community college are defined as anyone who has attended the college not just graduates of the institution. Within this case there was an

absence of on-going interactions with alumni; relationships have not been well maintained with the alumni of the college. Therefore, there are little to no financial contributions to the college from alumni. This HBCC does not have an official alumni association or alumni outreach process. As mentioned by Patricia, “there is no alumni outreach” (personal communication, May 17, 2017). The interactions between the IA professionals and the alumni is very limited: there is an alumni satisfaction and outcomes survey administered by the IA office every three years.

Within the office of IA, there is an alumni database with contact information; however, there are minimal efforts to try to solicit financial donations from the alumni. Patricia stated that, “we use our database to try to contact our alumni...by telephone. A lot of time, they change their telephone numbers so we often have a hard time staying in contact” (personal communication, May 17, 2017). Alumni do have the ability to go to the college’s website and complete an on-line form to enter their current contact information but only minimally used to update contact information.

**Employees as donors.** One of the goals within the college’s strategic plan is to “maintain financial stability and expand infrastructure.” This goal has been met by receiving financial donations from current employees. The data indicate that the largest group of contributors to the college are the current employees. The employees can opt to make contributions through a payroll deduction. This finding is supported by the list of foundation contributors in the college foundation’s newsletter (Trenholm Tech Foundation Newsletter, 2006). Patricia reported:

The major people who donate to our college are usually the employees that are here. And I think for the most part they give because... A lot of our students are first generation students so they see the difference in these students' lives by them being able to come here and get good jobs and go out into the community. They see it first-hand. They know the story of the type of students that come here. We have students that are homeless, we have students that have just really horrific stories... I think that our employees give because of that. They know that their money is going to scholarships to help...students (personal communication, May 17, 2017).

The IA office staff have interactions with the college employees on campus and create awareness of the need for donations for student scholarships. The college employees are aware of some of the background stories for the students, they are motivated to help the students, and so they give to financial donations to the IA office. The employees give money because they trust the IA office to put the money in the right place: the private gifts are allocated primarily to student scholarships.

As noted above, the employees at this college are the primary donors and Patricia reported how important it is to honor the individuals, including employees, who support the student scholarships:

And we try to do things to give back to the employees...We provide the college service pins [for financial contributions]...We do small things like that. To me, that's where they can see money that they're contributing to the foundation as comeback as a sort of a direct benefit to them (personal communication, May 17, 2017).

The campus community knows that the employees donate money to the foundation to support the student scholarship program because the employees' financial contributions are acknowledged publicly on the college's website and in the foundation newsletter (Trenholm Tech Foundation Newsletter, 2006). Patricia stated that, "people give money to things that they care about" (personal communication, May 17, 2017). The employees of this college genuinely care about the students at Trenholm and they continue to support the students by donating to the foundation.

**College friends.** One critical finding related to relationship building is working to establish friends of the college or friend-raise. College friends are individuals in the external community who may have an interest in the college and helping the community college with the advancement needs and goals. The IA office has a responsibility for building relationships with external community members to potentially create long-term stakeholders and generate money for student scholarships.

The steps that are taken to build a relationship with friends of the college are small steps. Building relationships with friends can happen with a variety of external community members, such as parents of students, former employees, and community businesses. Friend-raising can help support the IA office and what the college is trying to accomplish in the Montgomery community.

The first step to friend-raising is making connections through the foundation board members with individuals who may already have established friendships and trusting relationships. Patricia stated:

If you know that there may be someone that's on the [foundation] board or someone else that you know that may know the donor really well, if you can connect those people together and they include you in that connection or they introduce you, that's always a good way (personal communication, May 17, 2017).

Making connections with college friends or potential donors through the foundation board members is a start to building relationships with external community members.

The next step is to try to stay in contact with new and old friends of the college. Staying in contact with college friends can be done through social media or by using other forms of communications to the homes, such as newsletters. Whether social media or other forms of communication, the outreach to friends of the college creates awareness and lets people know about the upcoming college events. Finally, the goal is to bring the friends of the college back to the institution for college sponsored events.

College friends who begin to trust the college's fundraising process can potentially become donors. The friends of the college need to know what their money is going to fund. Patricia has to make an "ask," which is a plan of how an IA professional is going to approach a potential donor to get them to donate money to the college. If college friends evolve to potential donors, then Patricia will strategically make a plan of action on exactly how much money to ask. Building relationships with the college friends is critical to moving to the point where the IA office can ask for financial gifts to the college.

Not all college friends evolve into donors. Even if a friend of the college cannot contribute financially, they can become an advocate of the college and speak to the great



things that the college has done internally and for the outside community. As advocates, college friends can encourage some of their friends to make financial contributions to the college. Moreover, as advocates of the college, they may be able to encourage community members to enroll and attend the college.

### **Fundraising Challenges**

The IA office has had a few fundraising challenges. First, the IA office has a small staff. With a small staff in the office, there is no alumni outreach and it is a challenge to organize a formal alumni association. Patricia also admitted to not fully using the college board of trustees and president to fully engage alumni and other potential donors. More generally, Patricia named limited resources for the IA office as one of the challenges to fundraising, explaining that “in order to make money, you have to spend money” (personal communications, May 17, 2017).

### **Case 2: Coahoma Community College**

Coahoma Community College is an HBCC founded in 1949 and is currently located in a rural setting in Clarksdale, Mississippi. The college is a part of a larger community college system: Mississippi community college board (MCCB). Coahoma has one main campus, and nine satellite offices, and serves the people of five local counties. This HBCC is unique because the main campus is a residential campus. The overall mission of the college is to “provide accessible, affordable, diverse, and quality educational programs and services (Coahoma Community College Mission, 2017)” to the community. Currently, the college enrollment is: 95% Black and 5% White.

## **Institutional Advancement at Coahoma**

The IA office in this case is called the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The director of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) reports directly to the President. The IA office includes: the director of institutional effectiveness, assistant director of research and assessment, coordinator of federal programs, assistant coordinator of federal programs, and nine sponsored programs staff members. The IA office in this case is run by Carol, the director of Institutional Effectiveness and SAC (Southern Association of College) Liaison. The IA office also has a Federal Programs Coordinator, who is Sheryl, and she is responsible for grants.

The IA office is responsible for assessment, evaluation, strategic planning, college advancement and effectiveness, sponsored programs (including overseeing all grants), and scholarships. This IA office is not responsible for overseeing the foundation and alumni association. This office is responsible for writing state and federal grants, executing the details within the awarded grants, and gathering data for grant reporting. The office is currently responsible for seven grants. As the director of the office, Carol serves on 14 college committees, including leadership team, institutional effectiveness, strategic planning, scholarship, institutional review board, and quality enhancement team.

The alumni affairs office has two professional staff members and is separate from the IA office. The organization of the foundation and alumni affairs is together: both entities report directly to the college president (Coahoma Community College Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2015). The alumni affairs office has a director and oversees the alumni association.

The college has an active foundation and most of the foundation board members are external people from the community. The foundation at this college is the unit primarily responsible for fundraising and public relations. Foundation board members are responsible for generating external funding to help towards student scholarships and capital projects. The college does not have an established endowment.

The organizational chart displays 15 direct reporting lines to the college president (Coahoma Community College 2017-2018 Organizational Chart, 2017). Sheryl explained that, “the president is the liaison and always concerned about the vision” (personal communication, May 17, 2017). The president has a full cabinet to help aid in the advancement of the college, accomplish the nine college goals, and provide “quality educational programs and services” for students (Coahoma Community College Mission, 2017).

Sheryl mentioned that the president has an open-door policy, which gives him the opportunity to earn the trust of the campus community. An open-door policy aligns with the college’s “C.A.T.: Credible, Authoritative, and Trustworthy” values (Coahoma Community College Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2015). Sheryl described the president as “visible” and says that “he interacts with students all the time” (personal communication, May 17, 2017). The president's concern about the students and campus community is important to the advancement of the college.

There is an IA goal in the college’s strategic plan that addresses grants: it specifies, “increase external funds through resources through grants and donations” (Coahoma Community College Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2015). The goal highlights the

importance of grant funding to the IA division and the college. Currently, the IA office monitors seven grants that help support college curricular and social programs. Sheryl described how busy the office staff is during grants season: “an extreme busy work day is when we’re about to submit a grant” (personal communication, May 17, 2017).

One of the grants the office is responsible for managing is the “Title III, Part B for HBCUs and Student Aid and Financial Responsibility Act (SAFRA)” federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of Title IIIB is to “provide financial assistance to establish or strengthen” academic programs, physical structures, finances, or help develop an endowment (Coahoma Community College Title III and SAFRA Policy and Procedures Manual, 2015). The purpose of the SAFRA grant monies is like the Title IIIB’s purpose and the SAFRA money will provide this HBCC with funding to help support their strategic plan goals. The IA office has been able to distribute the funds to support over 10 institutional activities focused on enhancing curricular programs, physical plant, and funds and administrative management (Coahoma Community College Title III and SAFRA Policy and Procedures Manual, 2015).

Some of the annual fundraising events are planned by the foundation to help build strong partnerships with the internal and external community and are also used to generate funding for student scholarships. The major fundraising events are: the golden (50th year) anniversary dinner and award presentation, fall and spring homecomings, Founder’s Day event, Hall of fame induction, spring soiree, and Presidential scholarship gala. The annual golf tournament is the largest fundraising event for the college.

The golden anniversary dinner takes place during commencement weekend. This event is when many of the alumni who have graduated 50 years ago come back to the institution for a dinner and to receive a golden diploma. During the commencement weekend, events are held on Friday and Saturday, and this helps the IA office and other college administrators build relationships with alumni and get to learn more about the institution from its early days. There is a high expectation that employees, especially the leadership team, attends all the annual events.

### **Relationship Building**

This college's highest fundraising priority is relationship building with the internal and external community members. One of the fundraising strategies is building strong partnerships with local businesses. This strategy was listed on Coahoma's 2014 SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis as a strength, which was developed to help the institution create the 2015-2020 strategic plan (Coahoma Community College Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2015). Carol reported, "we have an objective to increase external funding by 3% annually. That's in our strategic plan" (personal communication, May 17, 2017). This college has been successful with building relationships with people in the local communities to fulfill the annual goal of increasing external funding.

The strategy of building strong partnerships comes into play with the grants, because some of the grants require the IA office to build partnerships with community partners to effectively execute the grant. Carol explained "our goal is to research and locate more grant opportunities and try to write for them, and that we're helping reach the

strategic goals of increasing external funds by 3% annually” (personal communication, May 17, 2017). Grant opportunities are critical when it comes to the office staff accomplishing their annual goals. The college’s strategic plan list a goal of “identifying college personnel who currently work with grants” (Coahoma Community College Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2015). Building relationships with internal and external community members would enable the IA office professionals to discover new grant opportunities to help them increase funding for programs and services.

**Alumni outreach.** Alumni at this HBCC is defined as anyone who has graduated from the college. The structure of alumni affairs at this HBCC makes this case unique, and this finding is supported by the college’s organizational chart within the college’s strategic plan (Coahoma Community College 2017-2018 Organizational Chart, 2017). Although the IA office oversees grants and the scholarship program, the office does not oversee alumni outreach. At this college, there is a formal alumni association, which is overseen by the director of alumni affairs. The office of alumni affairs reports directly to the President of the college. The IA professionals in this case have limited interactions with alumni. Most of their interactions with alumni happen during the annual foundation events. The IA professionals engage other internal and external stakeholders to support their office goal of increasing external funding by 3 % annually.

**College friends.** To build trusting relationships with alumni and external community members, the college foundation plans annual events to engage the community. For example, Sheryl described how the annual commencement events are used to build a rapport with the alumni:

The night before commencement, when the soiree...has been held, many of the alumni with 50 years, come back to receive their golden diploma. That's really great, and there are activities Friday and Saturday, so it gives us an opportunity to meet some... [alumni]. That gives us an opportunity to build a relationship and to hear about the beginning of the institution and to see where we are now. It's a great relationship builder (personal communication, May 17, 2017).

One of the strategies for building trusting relationships with the external community is to keep them involved in the on-going planned events that are held on the college campus. Sheryl explained:

I believe that keeping them [alumni and external community members] involved, inviting them to activities or meetings and forums that is related to the institution as a whole, as well as maybe what they are actually a part of as we continue to engage them. I believe that helps to build a trusting relationship, and share with them exactly what's going on, even if some challenges [are] happening. Make them aware. Let them know that this is what we plan to do. "This is what our initial action was, however it was changed, or there was a decision change. We want to make you aware we still want you to be part of us, our team. Continue to work with us and help us through this process as we build a relationship. Trust us" (personal communication, May 17, 2017).

Sheryl described how the HBCC extends the supportive relationship with alumni and other external community members:

Sometimes just a simple email reply, or sometimes reaching out when something has gone on wonderful... to say, "Congratulations, we saw it in the newspaper..." Yes. Sometimes those little things. Or pick up the phone to say, "Hello, we're here at Coahoma." Even sometimes when the chips are down, to say, "If there's something we can do to help you in this process, let us know." We will do all that we can (personal communication, May 17, 2017).

Sheryl provided some insight of how the college supports the alumni and other friends of the college by communicating with them during times of their career success or in times of need of support. The Clarksdale community is small, and so individuals within the HBCC discovers news about alumni and other friends via the local newspaper. Carol believed that it is important to reach out to the college friends and take the opportunity to support them. Both Sheryl and Carol believed that not communicating effectively with alumni and other friends of the college could hurt the relationship between the college and friends. Both participants asserted that providing effective, open communication is the best ways to establish trust with friends of the college and to keep an on-going positive relationship.

### **Mutual Benefits**

The largest benefit of the IA office is generating money for student scholarships, capital improvement projects, and student related activities. According to Carol, foundation funds have been used for student related activities, such as band or choir. One of the immediate benefits to the new graduates is the opportunity to take a picture with the college president at graduation. Graduation pictures at colleges cost, but this college



does not charge a fee for the graduation pictures. Sheryl reported some other small benefits to the alumni:

I would think there are some benefits for alumni. There's an office in the building where we are. Its open daily, a person [alumna/alumnus] could officially serve as an historian here at the college. When alums come and they want to see some albums or old photos or where a building used to be located, they come back to the alumni office and they are welcomed in. Most of the activities for the commencement for the 50 years [alumni] that come back are done through that particular office (personal communication, May 17, 2017).

In addition to being able to come back to campus at any time to view old photos, alumni have on-line access to the college yearbooks. The older alumni value the old photos, because it reminds them of the good times that they had as students at the college. Carol commented about alumni benefits, “They can become a lifetime member. It's \$200, and once they present their card, they get in any and every activity on the campus at no charge” (personal communication, May 17, 2017). The alumni card is a benefit and large incentive. The one-time payment of \$200 allows alumni to attend all college sponsored events without any additional fees.

### **Fundraising Challenges**

One of the challenges for this HBCC is having an alumni association that is not heavily involved with fundraising. This institution has an alumni association that is headquartered at the campus; however, the college foundation is responsible for the fundraising. Sheryl commented, that the alumni association is “steady” and the group is

“working on increasing or trying strategies to support the institution” (personal communication, May 17, 2017). The alumni at this institution stay connected with the college through their involvement with campus events. The challenge lies with capturing the alumni and encouraging them to make financial contributions to the college.

Another fundraising challenge is when alumni transition from the community college to a 4-year college, and then have more of a connection or alliance with the 4-year school they attended and graduated. Carol offered some insight to the challenge with alumni:

The challenge that we hear mostly [from the]...president, is that most people when they graduate from a community college and they go to a university, they usually stay committed to that last institution they have attended. I think the challenge is trying to help alumni understand that even though you may be supporting your last institution that you graduated from, helping them understand that the community college was a springboard to get them there. It's important to give back to the community college as well (personal communication, May 17, 2017).

The president has acknowledged this challenge for the college. The affinity of the transfer students begins to lie with 4-year college or universities. Therefore, community colleges must reach out to students and alumni and establish relationships that will lead to financial contributions. The alumni need to understand the importance of giving back to the HBCC that supported them while they were on their educational journey.

This HBCC does not have an established endowment fund supplement scholarship funds. Sheryl defined an endowment as a large amount of money that has

been given to the college and the college uses the interest of the funds to use towards scholarships, capital improvements, or research opportunities. The college's SWOT analysis documented "enhance alumni support/involvement" as one of the internal opportunities for growth (Coahoma Community College SWOT Analysis, 2014).

Acknowledging that alumni support could be an opportunity may be one of the tools to help advance the college's goals and help the college to start an endowment.

Another challenge that this office faces relates to resources to support grant writing and professional development related to grant writing. Sheryl described:

Grant writing is a huge part of this division, and sometimes being able to actually attend a number of workshops that are planned, and because of budget restrictions, we don't always get that opportunity. I think that becomes a challenge. If there's not a vehicle, we make it work. Utilize webinars. We'll do conference calls...We make it work (personal communication, May 17, 2017).

Although, the IA professionals may not be able to travel to trainings related to grant development, they are able to overcome this challenge by making connections with other external colleagues via a list serve.

Carol admitted that lack of communication is one of the mistakes they have made when it comes to the college community engaging alumni and while working to build trusting relationships. Carol stated, "sometimes when we are going through a challenge...or when an activity is over, or if a program is no longer in existence, sometimes we may just not communicate [to alumni or college friends] (personal communication, May 17, 2017). The data suggests that follow-up communication with

alumni and other college friends after events have been lacking, yet Carol was transparent about this fundraising challenge being a weakness that they can address.

### **Case 3: St. Philip's College**

St. Philip's College is a two-year college in the inner city of San Antonio, Texas. It was founded in 1898 by the Episcopal Church for "colored" girls. In the 1970s, the college was designated as a historically Black college and university (HBCU). The current campus is still located in the inner city of San Antonio and is now a part of a larger higher education system, the Alamo Community College District which consist of five 2-year colleges.

Today, this community college is unique because it is currently designated as an HBCU and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). St. Philip's is an HBCU, because it was identified as one of the colleges that were founded before 1964, with the original mission of providing access to education for Black Americans. In addition, the college is specifically an HBCC because it is a community college. St. Philip's has been federally recognized as an HSI, because of the college's high enrollment of Hispanic students is at least 25 % or more ([www2.ed.gov](http://www2.ed.gov)). Currently, the college enrollment is: 56 % Hispanic, 28 % White, 9 % Black, and 7 % other.

### **Institutional Advancement at St. Philip's**

The IA office director reports directly to the President. The office includes: the director of IA, two grant writers, one scholarship coordinator, and one administrative assistant. Additionally, there is informal support of alumni. The Alumni and Friends Association is unofficial, meaning some of the past students and graduates get involved,

but there is no formal organization with guidance or a board. The Alamo Community College District has one foundation to represent all the five colleges in the system, and so the IA office works collaboratively with the foundation.

Richelle, the IA director, explained “my primary job is to get donations from fundraisers to provide scholarship opportunities for our students. That's what I see as my primary job, to bring in revenue to support scholarship funds” (personal communication, May 24, 2017). At this HBCC, this IA office is directly responsible for engaging internal and external community members in the fundraising process. The annual financial goals are bringing in two-million dollars of grant funds, plus fundraising for a half of million in student scholarships.

According to Richelle the advancement priorities are:

Bringing in grants, writing grants, soliciting donors, coordinating special events for the college because community engagement is a big deal for us. That's part of the overall strategic plan, community engagement. In my office, I'm expected to do that (personal communication, May 24, 2017).

One of the strategic plan objectives is performance excellence, with one of the action steps listed as “maximize two-way communication with internal and external communities” (St. Philip’s Strategic Plan, 2016). This action step is aligned with the current IA office priorities. There was an organizational scan conducted in 2016, and “institutional fundraising that supports scholarships and encourages student engagement” was documented as one of the strengths of the college (St. Philip’s SWOT Analysis Report, 2016).

The president of the college plays a large role in the advancement of the college. Richelle described the president as a “servant leader.” The president is “the face of the college”; “she doesn’t just talk the talk, she walks the walk” (personal communication, May 24, 2017). The president’s role in fundraising includes visiting with donors and promoting the college with every opportunity she gets. Richelle stated, “[the president] focuses on friend-raising” (personal communication, May 24, 2017): she educates potential donors on the needs of the college and encourages them to visit the campus before they decide to donate. The president has high expectations for herself and her cabinet members; and therefore, she expects the IA office to meet their annual fundraising goals.

### **Relationship Building**

One of the major fundraising strategies is cultivating relationships with potential donors, including the on-going preparation and engagement of alumni, and internal and external community members. Richelle described how she cultivates relationships with potential donors: “We have a student-run restaurant and they literally prepare gourmet meals and a lot of times we invite donors to have dinner with us...we're having a donor appreciation dinner in our student run restaurant, Artemisia's” (personal communication, May 24, 2017). Artemisia’s is the on-campus restaurant that is the learning space for the culinary arts students at the college. The restaurant is named after Artemisia Bowden, who served the college for 52 years in the early 1900s. She started as a teacher and senior administrator, and she eventually became the president of the college.

The second fundraising strategy is community engagement. An example of community engagement is during the celebration of the college's anniversary, members of the college community attend church service on a Sunday at the college's founding church, St. Philip's Episcopal church in San Antonio, Texas. This is an opportunity to honor the founders, while engaging the current college community with the external community members.

Another strategy is collaborating with community partners. For example, the WNBA, Women's National Basketball Association has a team in the city called the San Antonio Stars. The women's basketball team sponsors St. Philip's during the year by providing tickets to the college for the college community members to attend a Friday night game. The college community can attend the basketball game with their family and friends.

Richelle believes in "partying with a purpose" (personal communication, May 24, 2017), and so she hosts events on and off campus to engage the community with the ultimate goals of raising money for the college. For example, Richelle explained:

Right now we're doing a lot of renovations...we renovated the science building. In doing so, we had an open house, and we did it collaboratively with homecoming. We coordinated an opportunity to showcase the science building, I had made a pitch to get some scholarship donations, so HEB [a local grocery store] gave us \$250,000 for scholarships. Of course, this was the opportune time for HEB to come to the event and present the big check (personal communication, May 24, 2017).

Richelle is a representative of the college and IA office, and she has built relationships with the HEB representatives. The cultivation of the relationship with HEB has led to collaboration opportunities. The grocery store has become a sponsor for the college. The donations received from HEB has been used to provide scholarships to current students. The collaborative relationships with external community members helps Richelle accomplish the IA office goals of increasing internal and external communication to generate money for student scholarships.

There is a city wide cultural festival called “Fiesta San Antonio” and Richelle plans one of the many events for the full 30-days festival. She described the college's CultureFest event as follows:

We do what we call culture fest. It's a big party and the community attends and we have vendors and we have a rib cook-off. We have a culinary department where the students participate. They cook, and they cook ribs and then we have judges like well-known chefs that come out and do a taster and they bet on it and what have you. During culture fest, we charge the vendors, say 10% of their revenue. That initiative, we used it to bring in scholarship dollars. This year we brought in \$13,000 for scholarships (personal communication, May 24, 2017).

The city wide "Fiesta" event highlights the many events taking place, and so the college's CultureFest is promoted. CultureFest is an opportunity for the college to bring students, staff, alumni, friends, and more external community members on campus to get involved with a day full of fun activities. CultureFest offers the food, music and entertainment to the attendees. There are also volunteer opportunities for the internal and



external community members. CultureFest is a marketing opportunity for the college: the college has the chance to highlight their campus, academic program offerings, and scholarship program. This is an opportunity for the IA office to fundraise through the CultureFest event: the event vendors have to pay a fee to have a table and this helps support student scholarships.

In addition to the San Antonio Fiesta, other events and strategies used to build relationships and generate private funds include the annual golf tournament, new building/building dedications, fall homecoming, high teas, Black history month events, Hispanic heritage month events, wine pairing galas, retiree's celebration, college anniversary, and WNBA games. Many of the college events are open to the outside community, which helps the institution build relationships and gain friends who believe in the vision of the institution.

The established relationships have led to the college being able to set up non-endowed and endowed scholarships. The internal and external community believes in the college's mission and vision and has been very supportive in providing funding for student scholarships. Richelle commented on a time when donors were honored for their on-going support of the college:

The San Antonio Chapter of The Links, they did an endowment with us and what they do, they started out with a \$25,000 endowment. Then they added another 25,000 and they keep adding to it. Now it's up to \$100,000, so guess what, every other year, we host a high tea for them. We host a high tea to celebrate them and their [scholarship] endowment (personal communication, May 24, 2017).

The endowed scholarship established by The Links helps support the scholarship program at the college. The money donated by The Links of San Antonio was invested and the interest is used to provide student scholarships. Richelle demonstrated the college community's appreciation of their friendship and financial support by planning a high tea for the group, which is a party when dinner is served accompanied by specialty teas and cakes.

Richelle believes it is important to “celebrate people” and show them thanks for the donations that they have provided to the college. She stated:

The big thing is the thank you. It's one thing for you to give me your money, but it's more important that I thank you. If it's \$100 or if it's \$500,000, I need to make it a point to say thank you and you need to thank a donor at least three times. What I do, what we do, is they get a thank you from the foundation, they get a thank you from the president, and then if they give to a specific fund, what we have to do is write thank-you letters (personal communication, May 24, 2017).

It is important that the donor receives the three separate thank you letters, so that they understand how appreciative the campus community is of the donation and that their donation has made an impact. It is important to respect the donors and show them that their donation has made a difference in the lives of current students.

**Alumni outreach.** Alumni at this HBCC have been defined as anyone who has attended the college. The relationships are built with alumni starting with invitations to all college events. The IA office has an alumni database and the alumni information is usually collected through registration to the college events. Registration is required for all

the events, and this has been a useful tool in gathering current information on alumni.

Richelle stated, “We put them in a database and we literally invite them. We invite them to attend our events. We send them newsletters. That's how we sort of engage. It's not a formal organization where they meet” (personal communication, May 24, 2017).

Although, this HBCC has a strong alumni database, the college does not have a structured alumni association.

**College friends.** The IA office takes time to cultivate relationships with the current student body before they leave the college. In addition to collaborating with current students on events, Richelle meets with the graduating students at their commencement rehearsal to discuss philanthropy and the importance of giving back to the college. Richelle reported:

What I do is during their graduation rehearsal, make them a pitch, I do an appeal, I tell them how I would like for them to wear the college name as a badge of honor and the importance of giving back. I promote philanthropy and tell them that we would love to stay in contact with you. We can go into the database and access your information but we're not going to do that. We'll only engage with you if you want to. I have an interest card and they fill out the interest card if they want to be included in the database (personal communication, May 24, 2017).

The meeting with the current graduating class is an attempt of Richelle and the IA office at making a connection with the current students and working to develop a culture of giving or philanthropy. Providing information on the IA office and foundation goals and the ideas of giving back can help build relationships with the current students. The

opportunity to engage with current students will hopefully help the IA office continue the relationships after the students graduate.

This case demonstrates on-going collaborative relationships with internal and external community members, which include interactions between the IA professionals, college president, current students, alumni, local community partners, local businesses, and friends of the college. One of the objectives in the college's strategic plan is "performance excellence" and the action step of "maximizing two-communication with internal and external communities" (St. Philip's College Strategic Plan, 2016). The IA office is meeting the challenge of maximizing the communication with the internal and external communities through face-to-face contact, newsletters, contact interest cards, and advertisements of events.

This college has been successful with building relationships with a variety of external community members or friends in the city of San Antonio. The college's SWOT analysis (2016) listed one of their strengths as, "institutional fundraising that supports scholarships and encourages student engagement." This college has gained the trust of the local community, because the college has been open for over 100 years. There are some colleges that have been open for over 100 years and they still have challenges with gaining the trust of the local community. This college is a staple in the community and has an established reputation of positively influencing the community. This IA office has met their annual expectations, and the community has been able to witness fundraising of private funds to support students by providing scholarships.

Richelle believes establishing relationships with community members can be dependent on how passionate the individuals are about the college and giving to the college. She knows that it takes more than trust for someone to donate to the college. She commented about the characteristics of the institutional donors: “people that are passionate about giving. I think the characteristic is recognizing if somebody helped them along the way and they want to give back.” Moreover, she states, “Most of the time, what I’m learning, that people that want to give, they give. It doesn’t take a lot of muscle for people that really want to give” (personal communication, May 24, 2017). Richelle’s belief that people are passionate about giving to others, then they are more inclined to give, is a mindset that is useful for her as an IA professional. Richelle’s job is to establish a friendship, tap into individual passions and provide opportunities for people to give in meaningful ways to the college.

Richelle believes that the strategy to establishing a trusting relationship is being honest with friends of the college and helping them understand the campus goals and needs. Establishing trust with friends can eventually encourage them to become donors: donors give because they understand that the money will go towards supporting students and campus enhancements. Richelle makes it clear to friends of the college that their contributions will go towards a specific scholarship, cause, or academic department. Richelle will go as far as asking what their interests are and take them on a campus tour to show them an area of campus or department that may align with their passion.

Richelle shared:

Just be honest. You always tell the truth. You just try to avail yourself. I can't think of anything other than being honest, making sure that they understand that you are going to be a good steward of their money. If somebody tells me that they want their money to go into the automotive department, I need to make sure I put it in the automotive department fund. I can't just arbitrarily take your money and put it where I feel there's a great need. I always tell the donors, you decide where you want your money to go and that's what we're going to do with it. We're going to constantly let you know what we're doing. You've got to just be honest and open and give them what they want (personal communication, May 24, 2017).

The goal is to ensure the donor that their funds will go directly to their area of interest. Richelle believes in being honest with all donors about the needs of the college and how their money will be used to support the college. However, Richelle explained that if a donor would like their money to be used for a specific academic department, then she will ensure the donations are applied according to donor's wishes.

Finally, Richelle commented, "people really will give, but you just have to ask" (personal communication, May 24, 2017). Richelle mentioned that the job of relationship building, and fundraising can feel like a hustle, which is working hard through the use of many approaches to earn money. However, she does not view it that way because she has learned that people will give to the organization when they are asked to give. Richelle as the IA professional has the opportunity to cultivate donors and simultaneously provide financial assistance to current students. She does this all by getting to know people,

understanding their interest, and helping them identify how they can help current students at the college.

### **Mutual Benefits**

This IA office is responsible for establishing collaborative partnerships with alumni, local businesses, and external community members to generate private funds for student scholarships. The anticipated rewards for both the IA office and internal or external community members have been very positive, which is documented as one of the strengths on the college's environmental scan (St. Philip's College Environmental Scan, 2016).

The most positive anticipated rewards for the IA office in this case are: building new relationships with internal and external community members, gathering accurate contact information of alumni, collaborating with community partners on special events, and receiving new financial donations. Alumni have also been supportive of the college through service: joining institutional committees, guest speakers for events, displaying art work for events, presenting at student groups. Richelle mentioned the positive outcomes:

They're [donors] the gift that keeps on giving because when you treat people nice, they can't do enough for you. That's the truth. When folks know that, "Oh, I'm making a difference. Look at this student. Look what they're telling me that my donation did for them" (personal communication, May 24, 2017).

In this quotation, Richelle is saying that the donors start to believe they are making a difference in the lives of students by providing financial contributions. Therefore, the continue to make donations or provide other services to the college,

especially when they are acknowledged for their donations and services. People want to feel appreciated and then they are more inclined to continue to give.

The rewards for the donors are knowing that they have helped students. Additionally, recognition of the donors makes the donors feel like they have done the “right” thing. Some of the alumni are celebrated as “distinguished alumni” at the annual homecoming (personal communication, May 24, 2017). There is also the “Mr. & Ms. Saint Philips” ceremony during homecoming and all the past homecoming kings and queens are invited to the event to be recognized and celebrated. Some other benefits or rewards for donors are: accessing the college career center and serving as liaisons on college committees.

### **Fundraising Challenges**

This HBCC has developed a culture of giving and collaborative relationships to help enhance the opportunities for donors to give. The largest fundraising challenge is not having current contact information on alumni and external community members in the fundraising database. Richelle discussed the challenge of getting in contact with the alumni and revealed that “the database is a work in progress” (personal communication, May 24, 2017). Richelle explained, “I guess if somebody signs up on the database and we can't really read their writing and we don't put them in the database” (personal communication, May 24, 2017). Richelle believes this is a challenge for the IA office, because the office is at a loss if they do not have current contact information for alumni and other external community members. If the IA office does not have current



information, then the IA staff is unable to engage and invite the alumni and community members to events.

The next fundraising challenge is cultivating relationships with younger alumni, specifically students who have left the college within the past 10 years. Younger alumni at this particular college are the individuals in their twenties. Richelle further explained “it’s harder to keep a handle on the younger, recent graduates because they’re still trying to make it. In this case, the younger alumni are getting themselves settled in a career, 4-year college setting, or a new city, it is a challenge to cultivate those relationships” (personal communication, May 24, 2017). It is difficult to make connections and develop relationships with the graduates who transition out of the college on to their next journey of settling at a 4-year college or university or moving on to their careers.

Another fundraising challenge is trying to encourage the graduates of the institution to “give back” or donate money after they have transferred to a 4-year institution. Richelle commented:

Then another challenge for us, a lot of people don't identify with a two-year institution. They might come here and get an associate degree, but if they go on to get a four-year degree, they get it right at the universities (personal communication, May 24, 2017).

Although, this institution receives many donations from the community at large, including older alumni, it has been challenging to connect with the students or graduates who transfer to a 4-year college or university. The community college graduates receive their Associate degree from the college and then they move on to obtain their bachelor's

degree. It is difficult for those past students to identify with the community college and they do not know how to stay connected as they begin a new journey with their 4-year colleges and universities. Those past students begin to recognize the 4-year colleges and universities as their Alma Mater, and that is what they celebrate and tend to support.

### **Cross-Case Analysis**

Stake (2006) described a multi-case study as an opportunity to better understand the quintain and highlight the uniqueness of each case in the multi-case study. The cross-case analysis is not an opportunity to compare the cases in the study (Stake, 2006).

Although there are some noteworthy commonalities among the IA office responsibilities, leadership, fundraising strategies, and challenges at all three case study colleges. Table 3 displays the common IA office responsibilities at the HBCCs.

The IA professionals in each of the three cases described IA at HBCCs as small divisions or offices at the community colleges. According to the IA professionals, the leader of IA at HBCCs is a part of the president's cabinet and reports directly to the president of the college. The IA office in Case 1 has a total of three people in the office and they are responsible for raising private funds for scholarships and securing external funds through federal grants.

Case 2 is unique because the word "effectiveness" is in the title of the office. In Case 2, the division is responsible for being effective with writing grants, monitoring grants, and gathering institutional data for reporting purposes. The IA professionals in Case 2 revealed that they are responsible for college strategic planning process and the evaluation of programs. Moreover, the office staff writes, monitors, and draft reports for

received grants. Case 2 IA professionals manage the student scholarship program, however, the college foundation plans most of the fundraising events.

The IA office in Case 3 has five full-time staff members. IA in Case 3 is responsible for bringing in 2 million dollars of grants and a half-million of private funds for scholarships annually. The IA professional in Case 3 is directly responsible for engaging the internal and external community members in the fundraising process.

Table 3

*Institutional Advancement Responsibilities*

	Case 1 Trenholm	Case 2 Coahoma	Case 3 St. Philip's
Strategic Planning	Yes	Yes	No
Research, Assessment, & Evaluation	Yes	Yes	No
Grants & Sponsored Programs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Foundation	Yes	No	No
Fundraising Events	Yes	No	Yes
Scholarships	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alumni Outreach	No	No	Yes
Endowment Management	No	No	No

**Institutional advancement at HBCCs.** The table shows one of the IA responsibilities for two of the three cases is to collaborate with other college offices with the strategic planning process. Strategic planning is the process that colleges and

universities use to define their vision or direction and the strategies that the organizations will use to achieve the goals to meet their overarching vision. The research, assessment, and evaluation of academic departments and curricular programs is supported by the IA professionals in both Cases 1 and 2.

Grants and sponsored programs are a large part of the IA offices at the HBCCs. Across each case, there is an IA professional who is responsible for seeking local, state, and federal grants. They are responsible for writing the grants and collecting all the supplemental documents needed to be included with the grant applications. Once any of the three HBCCs receive a grant for the college, the IA office as a whole is responsible for monitoring the grant. Sometimes the grants are led by specific college administrators or faculty, in which they ensure the goals of the grant are successfully executed. The IA professionals are responsible for monitoring the grant and facilitating the grant reporting processes.

Each case has a college foundation, which is a separate group of people, often alumni or college friends. The foundation is a group with board members that have a special interest in the college. In Case 1 and 3, the foundation works collaboratively with the IA professionals. The goal of the HBCC foundations are to help the IA office and college plan events to engage alumni and friends with the hopes of generating money to support student scholarships, capital improvements, and sometimes faculty research. The IA professional in Case 1 serves as the executive director or point-person of the college foundation. In Case 2, there is a foundation, but the group is overseen by the college

president. In Case 3, the Alamo Community College District has a foundation to represent all the five colleges within the system.

As mentioned already two cases out of the three in the study are responsible for collaborating with the foundation to plan fundraising events for the college communities to attend. The goals of the events are to raise money for student scholarships. The IA professionals are responsible for monitoring the student scholarship programs at the HBCCs. Current students at the HBCCs have the opportunity to apply for scholarships. Thus, the current students benefit from the fundraising events planned by the IA professionals and the foundations.

The table also shows that alumni outreach is not a responsibility of the IA professionals at Case 1 and 2, however the IA professional in Case 3 is responsible for direct alumni outreach. Alumni outreach is more than just inviting the alumni to fundraising events. Alumni outreach can be direct phone calls and mailings to alumni to solicit financial donations. Case 2 has a separate alumni office, with a director and official alumni association, in which this separate office is responsible for direct outreach to alumni.

Finally, endowment management is not a function of IA offices at HBCCs. Each of the HBCCs do not have an institutional endowment. In this study, the IA professional in Case 3 revealed that the college has many endowed scholarships established. The IA professionals in Case 1 and 2 are interested in establishing an institutional endowment for their colleges, and they know that it will take time to cultivate relationships with alumni

and friends and set goals of working with college friends to receive large donations that will help the colleges establish an institutional endowment.

**President as strategic leader.** Another across-case theme that emerged from the study was how the HBCC presidents are the leaders of the strategic vision of the college, including any advancement and fundraising goals or initiatives. The president's role in fundraising at an HBCC was revealed in all three cases. Across all three cases, the IA professionals viewed their college presidents as the "face" of the college fundraising and leader of the college advancement goals and efforts.

In Case 1, the president's role has been to help the college develop more external relationships with people. The president has been described as easy going and supportive of the advancement teams' goals. In Case 2, the president's role in fundraising is somewhat of a "liaison" and it was noted that the president is "always concerned with the vision" of the college. One of the IA professionals in Case 2 reported the president as "visible with the community and interacts with the students." In Case 3, the president is responsible for fundraising at the college and was described as a servant leader. The president has an established endowment fund, donates to the college, visits with donors, expresses the needs of the college, establishes relationships with stakeholders, and focuses on "friend-raising". In Case 3, the president was described as the "face of the college" and the "mentor" for the IA professional.

**Success in institutional advancement.** Some of the other people responsible for successful fundraising at the colleges are the foundation members, alumni association, college employees, and other IA professionals. Some of the people responsible for

fundraising in Case 2 are the foundation members, and the alumni association. In Case 2, the foundation is overseen by the President. In Case 3, the IA professional spoke about just the president as being one of the other individuals at the college responsible for fundraising at the college.

Success in IA is when goals have been met. Each of the cases strategic plan listed at least one large goal that is related to college effectiveness and advancement of the college through the generation of private funds. The IA professional in Case 1, revealed that success is when money has been raised and new friends of the college have been made. In Case 3, receiving a grant award, being able to provide scholarships, receiving a large donation, and well-attended events.

The fundraising strategies that were used in each of the cases were different. The emergent theme between the cases is the importance of relationship building with more than college alumni, or what is known in IA as friend-raising. Alumni are important to the each of the HBCCs, but there are a large variety of friends of the college or external community members supporting the strategic goals of each of the colleges. In Case 1, the unique fact is that the IA professional has interactions with past and current employees of the college. Essentially, the HBCC employees in Case 1 provided the most financial contributions.

In all three cases, one of the goals for coordinating events is to engage college friends and to inform them of the needs and fundraising goals. The key is to get the alumni and other external community members to come to the campus. The IA professionals in each case discussed how important it is to bring alumni and friends of the

college to campus for various events. Friends of the college are the external community members that care about or are interested in the advancement of the college, including the success of the current students. Friends of each of the three HBCCs are advocates for the colleges and some have evolved into donors who provide financial contributions to the college annual fundraising goals. Table 4 is a summary of major HBCC events that are used to raise private funds for the college.

Table 4

*HBCC Advancement Events*

	Case 1 Trenholm	Case 2 Coahoma	Case 3 St. Philip's
Annual Golf Tournament	No	Yes	Yes
Class Reunions	Yes	Yes	No
Homecoming	Yes	Yes	Yes
Employee Giving Campaign	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gala	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spring Soirée	Yes	No	No
Sports Hall of Fame Induction	No	Yes	No

**Alumni and friends.** For all the cases, the IA professionals mentioned the college's efforts to work with the unofficial or official alumni associations. It is important to the IA professionals to engage the alumni community, however, engaging the community college alumni is one of the fundraising challenges. Low staff in the IA offices and lack of a strong alumni data base were a couple of the other fundraising



challenges. Although, Case 3 mentioned the usage of an alumni database, Richelle in Case 3 commented on the challenge of having up-to-date information on alumni.

It was a challenge for the all four IA professionals to think about trust when it comes to building relationships with external community members. The common theme among all the cases is the fact being honest with all potential donors and making the donors aware of the needs of the colleges. Creating awareness for alumni and other external community members was a theme that showed up in each case. The data from all the cases suggest that the strategies to engaging alumni and external community members had a foundation of establishing trust and building a friendship.

This data suggests that the IA professionals and alumni or other external community members all gain some positive outcomes from their interactions. For each case, receiving federal grants, gaining new friends, and receiving private donations are some of the positive outcomes for the IA offices. Moreover, being able to use the collected private donations to offer scholarships to current students at the HBCCs. The colleges also bring alumni back to the campuses to volunteer or serve as guest speakers, in which this opportunity is a benefit for both parties. For alumni, some of the benefits are public recognition for donations and service to the colleges. Invitations to events are some benefits for alumni, and the events are opportunities for the IA professionals to request donations and opportunities. Additionally, the alumni to connect with the college's professionals and fellow alumni.

## **Summary**

In conclusion, the findings of the study focused on the quintain, which is IA at HBCCs, including the engagement of alumni in the fundraising process. The major themes are: “Institutional Advancement at Historically Black Community Colleges,” “Relationship Building,” “College Friends,” “Mutual Benefits,” and “Fundraising Challenges.” The next chapter will provide a discussion on the findings as it relates to the social exchange framework and the research questions will be answered to explain the quintain of understanding IA at HBCCs. Finally, chapter 5 will reveal the study’s limitations and suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion and Implications**

The purpose of this study was to understand institutional advancement (IA) at historically Black community colleges (HBCCs). The social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976; Molm, 2003) was the framework used to guide this study and as a lens to better understand the interactions between the IA professionals and HBCC alumni and how the IA professionals engage alumni in the fundraising process. The social exchange theory is used to explain the IA perceptions of their interactions with alumni.

Understanding IA at HBCCs was the main purpose of the study. To facilitate the task of better understanding IA at HBCCs and how the IA professionals engage alumni in the fundraising process, the following research questions were selected and used to help guide the study:

1. What is Institutional Advancement at HBCCs?
2. What are the fundraising activities and strategies used by the HBCC Institutional Advancement professionals to engage alumni in giving to the community college?
3. How do Institutional Advancement professionals at HBCCS perceive their social exchanges with alumni?
4. How does social exchange theory help us to understand Institutional Advancement at HBCCs?
  - a. What do the Institutional Advancement professionals describe as challenges of fundraising at HBCCs?

- b. How does trust play a role in the Institutional Advancement fundraising at HBCCs?
- c. What mutual benefits result from the social exchanges between Institutional Advancement professionals and alumni?

This study did exactly what Gasman and Commodore (2014), recommended with conducting research on HBCUs, especially on the topics of advancement, fundraising, and alumni giving. Although, I may be considered an “outsider” telling the narrative of an HBCU, this study focuses on telling a positive narrative of HBCCs and understanding the strengths and challenges of the IA offices through the voices of the HBCC IA professionals (Gasman & Commodore, 2014).

The findings reported in chapter four helped me to answer the overall research questions that were used to guide this study. The questions in this study became the major themes of the study to help describe the participants experience in IA at HBCCs (Stake, 2006). This study was not intended to be a generalization of IA offices at all HBCCs; however, it is an overview to help us understand IA at Trenholm State Community College, Coahoma Community College, and St. Philip’s College.

### **Summary of the Findings**

To understand IA at HBCCs and the strategies that are used to engage alumni there were four main research questions used to guide the study. These questions were used to explore IA at HBCC through the eyes of the IA professionals. The information provided are the answers to the research questions.

## **Institutional Advancement at HBCCs**

The focus of this multiple case study was to understand IA at HBCCs. The IA professionals in this study shared their knowledge of IA and what they each do on a day-to-day basis to present an overview of what IA is at HBCCs. The organization of IA within each case is different and this is based on the organizational structure of each HBCC (Tindall, 2007, 2008; Williams, 2010). I found that the HBCC IA offices are the functional areas that are responsible for planning and executing fundraising efforts, yet the organizational structure is different at the community college level (Barrett, 2006). The findings of this study are consistent with many of the responsibilities of IA professionals at the four-year HBCUs (Barrett, 2006; Carter, 2005).

I found that the HBCC IA professionals primary responsibilities are strategic planning, research and reporting, college development, grants, public relations, and fundraising (Underwood & Hammons, 1999; Worth & Asp II, 1994). My findings are consistent with the IA professionals' responsibilities at 4-year higher education institutions, which include cultivating relationships with alumni or other potential donors, institutional development, community and public relationships, marketing, and special events (Carter, 2005; Tindall, 2008).

I found that all the lead IA professionals at the HBCCs are key college administrators and members of the HBCC president cabinet, and so the IA professionals report directly to the presidents. The IA professionals described the IA offices at each HBCC as small (Tindall, 2007, 2008; Williams, 2010). The IA offices at 4-year HBCUs

can vary from small offices to large divisions, and this depends on the size of the college and the fundraising priorities (Tindall, 2007).

Across all three cases, IA is responsible for writing grants and monitoring of grants received. Grant writing is the means to receiving external federal, state, or local funding for specific programs at the HBCCs. These IA offices have a professional who is responsible for coordinating the process of searching for, writing, and submitting the application for grants. Although, the HBCCs receive funding for grants, there are specific guidelines to each grant on how the money should and could be used to fund academic or professional growth programs. Grants provide funding which helps strengthen the HBCC programs and campus efforts to create student success and the advancement of the college.

### **Uniqueness of IA at HBCCs**

The HBCCs are unique institutions of higher education. They are small organizations that have dual identities: The HBCCs are HBCUs, which are the colleges and universities historically founded to educate Black Americans. Moreover, they are community colleges serving diverse student populations in the local communities in which they are located. Case 3 is also designated as an HSI because their Latino/a student population is currently 56 %. These unique features of HBCCs appear to result in differences in IA at HBCCs as compared to the 4-year HBCUs and PWIs, on which most IA literature is based. Although, there are some similarities between IA at HBCC and IA or development at other 4-year college and universities, the environment and missions of the HBCCs are different (Skari, 2011) and therefore the IA function differs as well.

**Student population.** The HBCCs in this multiple case study serve large numbers of underrepresented students and students of color, thereby reflecting their community college mission (Jones, 2010; Juskiewicz, 2016; Lum, 2004). Consistent with community colleges nationwide, many of the students are from low-income homes (Conrad & Gasman, 2015; Hammons, 1998), and/or are, first-generation students, and non-traditional aged students with and without families (Akin, 2005; American Association of Community Colleges, 2016; Jones, 2010). HBCC students live in the surrounding communities (Juskiewicz, 2016) and seek HBCCs because of the access opportunities to higher education (Hammons, 1999). The presence of students within the communities of these colleges reinforces the local nature of HBCCs and a commitment to helping students. The IA professionals revealed one of the primary responsibilities as fundraising for and/or providing scholarships to students in need of financial support to attend the HBCCs.

**Emergency needs of students.** Just as Morgan (2007) found, the HBCC IA professionals in this study provide nurturing environments and often address emergency needs of students. Most IA professionals and fundraisers at 4-year colleges and universities are administrative, non-student facing roles and therefore are not routinely confronted by the emergency needs of current students. In contrast, the HBCC IA professionals in his study have a unique undefined role: serving the students by problem solving and providing support, frequently to address students' urgent financial needs.

For instance, the data show that these HBCC IA professionals have contact with current students and seek to provide scholarships to students in need, students they

interact with. Furthermore, the HBCC IA professionals revealed that the best part of their jobs is being able to provide scholarships to students with the funds they have raised. In this way, IA at HBCCs are functioning as a traditional 4-year college or university student affairs profession might. The HBCC IA professionals are dealing with issues within their jobs that are not normal to the role of IA professions as defined by the literature on 4-year colleges or universities.

**HBCC internal giving.** The findings in this study provide evidence of everyone getting involved in the giving process within the HBCCs, as others have noted (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998), and this is a part of the HBCC culture that supports philanthropy. I found that HBCC faculty and staff are some of the biggest givers of private donations. My data reinforce the idea that the internal environment of the HBCCs provide financial support and this is a large factor in the HBCC fundraising success (Akin, 2005; Skari, 2011).

As expected, the HBCC IA professionals make connections (Miller, 2013) and build strong relationships with the internal community, including students, faculty and staff. The engagement of the internal HBCC community enables the IA professionals to raise private funds and get financial support for student scholarships. Unique to HBCCs is the idea that receiving donations from the HBCC employees can be viewed as a success at a community college (Owens, 2016), and annual giving from stakeholders other than alumni has been identified as the most successfully fundraising strategy at a community college (Jones, 2010). This finding demonstrates that everyone within the



HBCC community focuses on contributing to the culture of giving and reinforces what other researchers have found (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998; Owens, 2016).

**Leadership in IA.** Leadership is a key in building relationships and effective fundraising (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998; Hall, 2002; Owens, 2016). Experienced IA professionals can successfully support the college's fundraising efforts (Jones, 2010; Owens, 2016; Starace, 2012). The HBCC IA professionals in this study all have over 10 years of experience in IA and demonstrated leadership abilities. They all embody the leadership traits of servant leaders: first, they are leaders within the IA offices and second, they choose to serve others in the HBCC community (Greenleaf, 1995). The fact that the IA offices are small, they are all responsible for multiple tasks and serve on multiple committees. Their daily efforts and social exchanges with various internal and external community members help support current students and sustain the futures of the HBCCs in part by generating money for student scholarships. Servant leadership among IA professionals in this sample of HBCCs is demonstrated in the way the IA professionals talked about how they help current students.

As the leaders of the IA offices, the HBCC IA professionals' daily work is about transforming the lives of HBCC students. These IA professionals have a democratic leadership approach to their work, as they "inspire and mobilize" many people in the internal and external community "to undertake common problem-solving tasks" (Cronin, 1995, p. 306) and address common goals of advancing the colleges, making an impact in the local communities, and generating money for student scholarships. As the IA professionals act out their own commitment to their institution's students they exercise

their own leadership while still consulting with the president and others inside and outside of the HBCCs to address the goals of the strategic plans and the immediate needs of HBCCs students. Moreover, the IA professionals' social exchanges with community members are just: they are engaging community members as equals (Cronin, 1995; Searle, 1990). This engagement is very important for HBCCs because they are small and have limited resources, furthermore collaboration is essential for the advancement of the HBCCs (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998). The IA professionals demonstrate true leadership while they lead their teams, yet keep their presidents informed with on-going communication (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998).

**Leadership of HBCC presidents.** The HBCC presidents are the strategic and educational leaders (Owens, 2016). The HBCC presidents are the lead fundraisers and use a strategic approach to fundraising (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998). I found that the HBCC presidents demonstrate visionary and servant leadership traits, and they use the strategic plans to help guide their efforts in educating the internal and external community members (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998) to advance the colleges. The HBCC presidents are visible on and off campus (Pumerantz, 2005; Ryan & Palmer, 2005) and known as the “faces of the HBCCs”. The presidents are responsible for building relationships with the internal and external community members (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998; Miller, 2003; Owens, 2016; Ryan & Palmer, 2005) and advocating for the HBCC students and the HBCCs. In this aspect, HBCC presidents are very similar to the four year college and university presidents discussed in the literature (Barrett, 2006; Gasman, 2000; Williams, 2010).

## **Relationship Building**

The HBCC IA professionals in this research study disclosed a variety of activities and strategies used to build relationships with internal and external community members. Fundraising activities and strategies are different at each of the HBCCs, due to the organization of the HBCC and IA office. This study's findings aligned with Gasman and Bowman, III's (2003) findings on the organization of the 4-year HBCUs determined the fundraising outcomes. Overall, fundraising activities and strategies are a vital practice of the survival of the public HBCUs (Barrett, 2006; Cohen, 2006, 2008; Gasman, 2000; Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998; Rivard, 2014; Tindall, 2007, 2008; Williams, 2010), including alumni support (Fields, 2001). The HBCCs in this case study have a different story. HBCC fundraising activities and strategies are critical to the generating private funds for student scholarships, however financial support from alumni is not as significant to their fundraising strategies as it is for universities.

In this study, the HBCC IA professionals revealed one of the major fundraising strategies: relationship building (Fields, 2001; Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998; Skari, 2001). Relationship building is a strength the HBCCs and has helped the IA professionals develop relationships with more friends of the institutions (Collett, 2014; Hall, 2002). Friends of the HBCCs are a variety of internal and external community members who find an interest in the needs and advancement goals of the colleges. Friends of the HBCCs can become advocates or donors of the HBCCs.

The HBCC IA professionals in this study are highly involved with engaging the external community in fundraising. As a sector community colleges excel in relationship

building and have great relationships with local business (Collett, 2014; Fields, 2001; Goldstein, 2005; Ryan & Palmer, 2005). Within this community college context, it makes sense that these HBCC IA professionals are intentional about building relationships with local businesses in the surrounding communities where the colleges are located. The HBCCs and local businesses have common concerns: They are all concerned with institutional and workforce development. It is important for the HBCCs to respond to the needs of the businesses in the communities and be able to have the businesses support the HBCCs with their internal needs (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Molm, 2003; Morgan, 2007). However, 4-year HBCUs traditionally are engaged with cultivating relationships with alumni to engage them fundraising process (Cohen, 2008; Gasman, 2006; Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013).

Consistent with the scant literature on HBCCs, the IA professionals in this study engage the internal and external community in the fundraising by building collaborative partnerships (Cook & Lasher, 1996; Emerson, 1976; Ryan & Palmer, 2005). Grant writing and the execution of the major objectives of a grant that has been received requires the IA professionals to interact with internal and external community members. The local, state and federal grants that the HBCCs have received have required the institutions to forge partnerships with faculty and staff members on campus to successfully oversee the coordination of grant activities and programs. Additionally, some of the received grants call for the IA professionals to engage the external community, including business partnerships to coordinate the grant objectives. For

example, Case 2 provides on-campus summer enrichment programs for the high school students in the local area.

I found that one of the HBCC fundraising strategies is using the leader of the HBCC to lead the charge and oversee the execution of the college advancement or development goals. Great leadership, a good plan of action, and support of the IA staff are critical to successful fundraising at HBCUs (Eldridge, 2016). According to Barrett (2006) and Gasman (2000), on their studies of fundraising at HBCUs, the primary responsibility of fundraising is placed on the presidents of the institutions. In this study, it was found that the HBCC presidents are the leaders who are responsible for fundraising for the HBCCs. The presidents are viewed as the “face” of the HBCC and represent the colleges by building relationships within the college and outside in the local community members (Glass, Jr. & Jackson, 1998; Smith, 2017). The data suggests that the presidents’ influence and connections in the community are one of the strategies used to advance the college’s vision and strategic plan, which also reflects Glass, Jr. and Jackson’s (1998) findings. Within this study and the literature, HBCC presidents’ make fundraising a priority and collaborative effort (Barrett, 2006).

I found that advocacy for the college needs and student scholarships is another fundraising strategy of the HBCC IA professionals. The HBCC IA professionals are responsible for reaching the office goals, and this is done practically through advocating for the HBCCs and the students. This focus on advocating for students may be unique to HBCCs. HBCC IA professionals use this strategy with external community members who may not been on campus at all or in a while. Sometimes alumni and friends of the

college are informed of the specific needs of the college, such as collecting donations for student scholarships. There are times when the HBCC presidents or IA professionals meet with alumni or friends off campus, with the intentions of promoting the college and advocating for the current students and other needs of the college.

The fundraising activities and events that the HBCC IA professionals use to build relationships with internal and external community members can range from small on-campus activities to large annual events that take place on or off campus. The data suggests that an effective way to engage all friends of the college is to invite people to events on campus. According to Harrison (1995), invitations to on campus events increases alumni participation and the participants in this study reinforce this idea. The common event between all the cases was the annual homecoming, which is generally focused around supporting one of the HBCC sports teams. During homecoming HBCC alumni and friends are invited to come to campus and encouraged to get involved. The importance of homecoming for IA and development has been found more broadly in the literature (see Babitz, 2003).

### **HBCC Alumni and Friends**

The IA professionals at the HBCCs perceive their social exchanges with alumni as limited exchanges. In this study, the IA professionals in Case 1 and 2 defined alumni as graduates of the HBCCs. However, in Case 3, the IA professional defined alumni as anyone who has attended the college. HBCC alumni are involved in some of the fundraising events. Nonetheless, there is no current data to determine how often alumni provide financial donations to the HBCCs. The IA professionals revealed that interactions

with all internal and external community members, including friends of the HBCCs are important exchanges.

Alumni support and financial donations are viewed as critical components to successful fundraising at HBCUs (Gasman, 2013). Babitz (2003) offers that community colleges are just beginning to see the value of getting alumni involved and engaging HBCC alumni in the fundraising process. The data from this case study suggests that the HBCC IA professionals see the value of getting alumni involved and engaged in the fundraising process, but there are some challenges to getting HBCC alumni involved.

I have found that the HBCC IA professionals are responsible for generating private funding, and most of the social exchanges with alumni and friends happen at planned HBCC events. In Case 1 and 2, the IA professionals revealed that there is little to no alumni outreach, to directly ask alumni for donations. Moreover, it was found that other HBCC community members have more on-going contact with the alumni, such as the college foundations. In Case 2 there is an alumni affairs office with an alumni director whom reports directly to the president at the college; and therefore, the IA professionals in Case 2 are not directly involved with engaging the alumni in the fundraising process. In Case 3, the IA office is responsible for alumni outreach, so the IA professional had a different view regarding interactions with alumni. The IA professional in Case 3 believes that the events provide the opportunity to have social exchanges with alumni and other friends.

I found that within the strategic plans of all three cases, the objectives list the intent to build interdependent relationships with alumni and other external community

members. This supports findings of Cook and Lasher (1996) and Searle (1990). The goals are to further develop partnerships that will be mutually beneficial for the all internal and external community members (Molm, 2003; Searle, 1990). One of the goals of the strategic plan explicitly addresses the interactions with alumni: to get more of the younger alumni involved on campus and in the fundraising process.

### **Social Exchange Theory in IA at HBCCs**

The HBCC IA professionals in this study all have on-going social exchanges with internal and external community members (Cook & Lasher, 1996) to create mutual beneficial partnerships (Emerson, 1976; Molm, 2003; Searle, 1990). Social exchange theory is the theoretical framework used to help to better understand the quintain in this case study, IA at HBCCs. The main social exchange theory concepts highlighted in this study are: trust, reciprocity, just interactions, costs of the interactions, and anticipated rewards. The overall goal of the social exchanges between HBCC IA professionals and the internal and external community members are mutual beneficial partnerships. The HBCC IA professionals have interactions with current employees, retired employees, community businesses, and various external friends of the college.

The data showed that the HBCC IA professionals and the college friends both have mutual control and power of the relationships, an idea that has been discussed more generally within the IA community college literature (Hall, 2002). The social exchange theory helps me understand that the IA professionals have interactions with both internal and external community members who are motivated to engage in a relationship to create mutually beneficial partnerships. The basic tenets of social exchange were visible in this



study as the IA professionals discussed the major functions, goals, strengths, and challenges of the HBCC IA offices.

The HBCC IA professionals revealed that relationship building and friend-raising are critical to the fundraising goals of the HBCC IA offices. In each case, the IA strategic plan goals were related to building internal and external relationships with people to help generate private funds for student scholarships. Relationship building starts with establishing trust between two parties (Searle, 1990). Social exchange theory's concept of trust supports this study's findings, because the IA professionals have to develop relationships with people in the internal and external communities and get them to trust the fundraising process (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). I found that the IA professionals believe that once alumni and other community members start to trust them and trust that donations will be designated to student scholarships, then the alumni and friends are more likely to make donations; this is consistent with the literature (Gasman, 2000; Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013; Tindall, 2008).

**The role of trust.** I found that trust plays a role in the fundraising process in IA at the HBCCs. Trust is the foundation of any social exchange relationship (Molm, 2003). Relationship building was a large theme in this research study, and each of the IA professionals discussed how relationship building was important to help them accomplish the IA office goals. As Molm (2003) noted, social exchanges between two parties that were more reciprocal than negotiated, shaped relationships with higher levels of trust and feelings of commitment. The HBCC IA professionals create awareness in their exchanges

with internal and external community members, which was identified as one of the ways to establish trust.

In this study, getting the internal and external community members involved in some of the on and off campus events enabled the IA professionals to start building trusting relationships with people. Thus, trust allowed many of the community members to become friends of the college. Being honest with all friends of the college helps build trust in the relationship. Alumni and friends are more inclined to donate funds to the colleges if they trust the IA professionals and the college presidents (Gasman, 2000; Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013; Tindall, 2008).

**Mutual benefits.** A mutually beneficial partnership is the overall goal of the social exchange framework and helps us to understand the interactions between IA professionals at HBCC and alumni. The ultimate goal of the mutual beneficial partnership is to develop relationships that are trusting, fair, and interdependent (Molm, 2003). Mutually beneficial partnerships are partnerships that have been established between both parties with the plans of anticipated outcomes or rewards to each party (Molm, 2003; Searle, 1990).

I found that the interactions between the HBCC IA professionals and alumni are limited. In Case 1, the focus is not really engaging the alumni, so there are minimal mutual benefits between both parties. In Case 2, there is an alumni affairs office that reports directly to the President, and the director of the alumni affairs office focuses on outreach to alumni. Case 2 shows us that the IA office oversees the scholarship program

for current students. Generating private funds for student scholarships is one of the largest benefits for the IA office in Case 2.

The most anticipated reward, as defined by Cook and Lasher (1996) for the IA professionals is making a connection with internal and external community members to develop friendships. Friend-raising is the one of the goals for the IA office, which is establishing new friends and cultivating the relationships to potentially receive financial donations. The IA professionals in this study anticipate financial donations to contribute to student scholarships, student activities, and capital improvement projects.

The most anticipated positive rewards for HBCC alumni are the benefits, such as being able to attend the college events and access to college staff. Additionally, alumni who donate can receive tax deductions and public acknowledgements for making financial contributions. The feeling of giving back to support students and “uplifting the race” can be viewed as a benefit (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2013). Alumni who are involved at the HBCCs without providing any financial contributions receive love from the institutions regarding their support.

I found that there are positive rewards or benefits for external community members. For instance, in Case 3, HEB is a local grocery store in San Antonio, Texas and an external community member. HEB recently provided Case 3 \$250,000 for student scholarships. This was the opportunity for HEB to come to the college event and present the big check. As an external community member and supporter of the HBCC, HEB was able to provide funding for the college students to receive scholarships, and they were able to benefit from this opportunity. The event provided a platform for HEB and

publicity for their stores and service to the local community, specifically the students of the HBCC.

### **Fundraising Challenges**

The HBCC IA professionals in this study described the fundraising challenges they face while attempting to cultivate relationships with internal and external community members. As Cohen (2008) declared, all HBCUs have a responsibility to cultivate relationships with alumni and engage them in the fundraising processes to help address financial challenges. One of the common themes among all the cases is a low number of staff in the IA offices. Similar to Tindall (2008), I found that each of the three HBCC IA offices have a different organizational structure. The small number of IA professionals posed a challenge on the advancement priorities and how the IA professionals have successful social exchanges with internal and external community members to cultivate relationships to help them raise money.

Another fundraising challenge at HBCCs is lack of resources and budget restrictions. According to Searle (1990), maximizing gains while minimizing costs is a priority in a social exchange relationship. This is relevant to how Patricia in Case 1 described limited resources for the college foundation, as she stated that "in order to make money, you have to spend money." Although, it is imperative in a social exchange partnership to minimize cost, Patricia knows that the college foundation will have to spend money and to help cultivate relationships with potential donors. Barrett (2006) asserted that the presidents of the HBCUs must provide sufficient resources to the

advancement offices and divisions to support their institutions and the strategic fundraising efforts.

Another fundraising challenge of the HBCC IA professionals is not having current contact information on alumni within the fundraising database and developing an official alumni association in Case 3. The data in this research study shows that there is low engagement between the HBCC IA professionals and alumni, and so the alumni are not utilized as one of the top resources for generating revenue. Community college alumni are one of the most underutilized resources for generating revenue, and this study revealed this to be true at HBCCs (Herbin, Dittman, Herbert, & Ebben, 2006).

### **Limitations**

This study focused on the quintain, understanding IA at HBCCs and how the IA professionals engage the alumni in the fundraising process. A couple of the research questions focused on the perceptions of the IA professionals and their social exchanges with alumni. I found that the HBCC IA have limited interactions with alumni, and so I see this as a limitation on the amount of information I was able to discover about engaging HBCC alumni in the fundraising process. The parameters of the case study and criteria of the participant selection of this case study limited the participants to only IA professionals. Therefore, this research did not explore the experiences of other HBCC staff members who may be involved with fundraising or engaging alumni in the fundraising process.

## **Implications for Practice and Leadership**

HBCCs need effective leaders who believe in the mission of the institution and will collaborate with others in the community to ensure the goals within the strategic plans are being executed well. In sum, HBCCs need transformational and servant leaders (Smith, 2017). The HBCC presidents can engage the board of trustees in the idea of redesigning the student experience (Johnson, 2015).

Community college students who are active and more engaged on campus are more likely to have a bond with the college (Drezner, 2008; Pumerantz, 2005; Skari, 2011; Starace, 2012). Together with the IA professionals and other college leaders, the president can reshape the experience of the students to help build a culture of socially engaged learners. This gives the president and other internal community members the leverage to build a culture of connectedness and philanthropy, as the internal environment of a community college is the largest factor in fundraising success (Akin, 2005; Owens, 2016; Skari, 2011).

Based on the findings of the study, relationship building with internal and external community members or friend-raising is one of the strategies for engaging people in the fundraising process. HBCC presidents are the educational leaders of the institutions and one of their other roles as president is to serve as a lead fundraiser helping to build relationships with internal and external community members. The HBCC presidents may choose to actively engage the current students and alumni to create a culture of collegiate involvement and philanthropy. The president must support the leaders of IA professionals with social programming for current students to build their knowledge on the importance

of giving to the HBCCs. For example, the HBCCs have a day of service in which the students can volunteer for service projects at the HBCCs. There can be a panel of HBCC alumni who have received scholarships and they can come back to speak to current students about how the scholarships have made an impact in their lives. Additionally, programming could be geared towards students about ways to give to the HBCCs after they leave or graduate: how to give money, be a volunteer on campus, or advocate for the HBCCs out in the external community.

The HBCC IA professionals can develop a student call center of a small group of current students to conduct a phone-a-thon. This is a common tactic among four year colleges and universities (Gasman & Bowman, III, 2012) and is one approach for connecting current students and alums and other potential donors. The students could contact local businesses, friends of the college, or alumni to briefly educate the individuals contacted of the needs of the college and solicit donations. This phone-a-thon program could be a volunteer or job opportunity for the current students, but this builds HBCC pride of the students involved, helps them to serve as advocates for the HBCCs, and stresses the importance of giving, while students are still enrolled at the college.

The study's findings may encourage the IA professionals to develop an HBCC IA consortium to share one another's strengths and to learn from each other. I have learned about a number of friend-raising and fundraising approaches from each of the IA professionals that were not used by all of the participating HBCCs. In addition, the IA professionals could potentially look at some of the 4-year colleges and universities that their past community college students transfer to and collaborate with the IA offices at

the four-year institutions on a collaborative giving program. For example, if HBCC alumni have transferred to a 4-year HBCU and they provide a financial donation, the HBCC that the alumni attended could get a percentage of the financial donation.

Finally, this study's findings generated implications for practice related to making more connections with the external community based on the interest and needs of the outside community. This study could help the leaders of the HBCCs by helping them identify their current academic programs and develop plans to integrate the current students in the external community. Civic engagement at HBCUs was found to be a great way to develop partnerships with the community (Smith, 2017). For example, Case 3 can continue to engage the current students of the culinary program and connect them with local businesses in the community. Additionally, all the cases can continue to support the IA professionals in their efforts to address college advancement goals by strategically creating partnerships between the college and the external community.

### **Implications for Research**

Although, the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976; Molm, 2003; Searle, 1990) was helpful in revealing the relationship building component in IA at HBCCs, it did not address the idea of the lack of exchanges specifically with alumni. Further research is needed to understand what happens when relationships do not exist. Due to the specific criteria of study participants, I was unable to interview other participants in the HBCC community. Further research should be conducted to look at the individuals who have more direct contact with alumni, such as the HBCC presidents, (Barrett, 2006; Conwell, 2013), foundation members, alumni affairs directors, or faculty. While the IA



professionals interviewed at each HBCC all have the responsibility of advancing the goals of the college and generating private funds, the IA professionals in the study have limited social exchanges with alumni to generate donations.

Further research should be conducted to look at the connection between the HBCC and their 4-year HBCU counterparts. A study looking at the pipeline or transfer connection between the HBCCs and 4-year colleges and universities would provide some insight into the role transfer plays in decreasing the alumni connection to the HBCC. A study in which HBCC alumni would be interviewed to gain an understanding of if they feel connected to the HBCC after transferring to a 4-year college or university and if they are aware of the importance of giving back to the HBCCs.

Another implication for research is the need to hear the voices of the alumni of HBCCs. Further research should be conducted by directly interviewing and/or surveying the alumni of the HBCCs to expand the knowledge on the best strategies to engage alumni in the fundraising process at the HBCCs and the challenges that may impact their ability to donate to the HBCCs. This study would potentially identify alumni perceptions and who would most likely continue to support the HBCCs after they have left the HBCCs.

Finally, the last implication for research is the need to conduct more research on HBCCs. The HBCCs are “little known and little-recognized” (Morgan, 2007) and there is a lack of scholarly research on the 2-year institutions. As I have noted in my research, they have dual roles, as they are recognized as both HBCUs and community colleges. There are only a total 13 (11 public and 2 private) HBCCs in the U.S. and so this makes

them special. More research needs to be conducted so the higher education researchers and professionals can learn more about their nurturing environments (Morgan, 2007), and how well they serve the students who attend the HBCCs and the local communities.

## **Conclusion**

Fundraising to gather alternative sources of income is critical for all HBCUs, (Barrett, 2006; Berry, 2005; Cohen, 2006, 2008; Gasman, 2000; Rivard, 2014; Tindall, 2006, 2008; Williams, 2010) including the little known HBCCs (Morgan, 2007). The purpose of this case study was to explore IA at HBCCs to better understand the functional area and the strategies that are used to engage alumni in the fundraising process. My intentions were for the reader to understand IA at HBCCs, the fundraising strategies at HBCCs, and how the IA professionals use social exchanges with alumni to engage them in the giving process. The social exchange framework was used as a lens to help us discover IA at HBCCs and how relationship building with internal and external community members is critical to the fundraising goals and advancement of the HBCCs.

Today, most literature on HBCUs has a focus on the 4-year colleges and universities. There is a lack of knowledge on HBCCs (Morgan, 2007), and scholarly research on HBCCs, especially in the areas of institutional advancement, development, fundraising, and alumni giving (Gasman & Commodore, 2014). It was important to start a positive narrative to help build a knowledge base to generate support for the HBCCs (Gasman & Commodore, 2014).

Overall, this case study helps us to understand IA at HBCCs. This study illuminated the HBCCs strengths and challenges of their IA offices could potentially

advocate for more support for HBCCs and other 2-year minority-serving institutions (Stake, 2010). Scholars have limited information on IA at HBCCs, and so this case study will be a contribution to the storytelling and positive narratives on HBCCs (Gasman & Commodore, 2014).

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## **Appendix A**

### **Letter to Historically Black Community Colleges**

Dear President \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Lakeisha Carter and I am a doctoral candidate in the Rowan University Educational Leadership program in Glassboro, New Jersey. One of my dissertation mentors is Dr. Marybeth Gasman, who is a professor of higher education in the graduate school of education and director of the Center for Minority Serving Institutions at the University of Pennsylvania.

I am in need of your assistance for my dissertation. The historically Black community colleges (HBCCs) are invited to participate in a small research study. I am conducting a qualitative case study on Institutional Advancement/Development at historically Black community colleges. The research participants will be higher education professionals who work within institutional advancement or development at an HBCC.

Only one volunteer from your campus will be needed to participate in this study. The study participant could be anyone you recommend from your institutional advancement staff. I would need to interview the professional staff member who is responsible for engaging the alumni and/or fundraising for the college. The interview would be over the telephone and last approximately 60-90 minutes.

To maintain confidentiality, I will provide pseudonyms for your advancement/development staff member. If you agree to have a professional staff member participate, I would need a permission e-mail from you to be submitted to Rowan University's IRB. In addition, if your campus requires IRB approval, please inform me of the person I should contact.

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have about this study. I can be reached by phone at (716) 510 - 6870 or e-mail at [Lscarter716@gmail.com](mailto:Lscarter716@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Lakeisha Carter, MS  
Doctoral Candidate  
Rowan University, Educational Services & Leadership Program

## **Appendix B**

### **Letter of Informed Consent**



### **CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

**TITLE OF STUDY: Institutional Advancement: A Multi-Case Study of Historically Black Community Colleges**

**Principal Investigator: Dr. Monica Kerrigan-Chair & Lakeisha Carter-Ed.D.  
Candidate**

Dear participant,

This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a case study and it will provide information that will help you to decide whether you wish to volunteer for this research study.

You are invited to participate in a qualitative research study. The purpose of this case study is to understand institutional advancement at historically Black community colleges. Through the lens of individuals who work in institutional advancement, this research will explore institutional advancement at the community colleges and how alumni are engaged in the fundraising process.

If you desire to participate, you will share information by responding to a series of questions asked by the researcher. The one-on-one interview with the researcher will take approximately 60-90 minutes. The interview will be via telephone or virtually (I.e. Skype, FaceTime). The interview will be recorded by a digital recorder, and the researcher will take notes during the interview.

No risks or discomforts are anticipated from participating in this research study. There is no direct benefits to you, but it is expected that your participation will help inform the research study.

Any information obtained in this study in which you can be identified will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Everyone who participates in this study will be identified by a pseudonym. A transcript of the research study findings will be kept in a private file with the researcher. I would be happy to share my findings with you after the full study is completed.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your future relations with the Rowan University Educational Services and Leadership program. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the research study at any time without affecting your relationship with the institution.

If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to ask me. You can contact me at (716) 510-6870 or [Lscarter716@gmail.com](mailto:Lscarter716@gmail.com).

You are making a decision whether to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided about this research study and have voluntarily decided to participate.

Thank you for your participation!

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Participant Signature

---

Date

---

Lakeisha S. Carter, Investigator

---

Date



## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Protocol**

#### **Institutional Data**

1. What year was your college established?
2. What year was your college designated as a historically Black college/university (HBCU)?
3. What is the location of the college?      oUrban      oSuburban      oRural
4. Are you a single campus or a part of a larger system?

#### **Institutional Advancement Data**

1. Tell me a little bit about how you got here to this institution...
2. Are you an alum or alumnae of this college?
3. What is your highest level of education?
4. How many years have you worked in higher education?
5. How long have you worked at this institution?
6. How long have you worked in Development/Institutional Advancement at an HBCU?
7. What is your current job title?
8. What are the primary duties of your current position?
9. Please describe a slow work day...
10. Please describe a busy work day...
11. Do you have experience with fundraising? If so, how many years?
12. What is your role in fundraising for the college?

13. How do you define success in your role as a fundraiser for the college?
14. How do you know when you have been successful in your role? Could you tell me what may hinder your success as a college fundraiser?
15. Who are all the people responsible for fundraising for the college?
16. Please describe the president's role in fundraising for the college...
17. Please describe the president's leadership style...
18. What are the president's expectations of this department/office?
19. What are the president's expectations of you?
20. What advancement or fundraising goals are listed in the college's strategic plan?
21. What goals do you have to address any larger goals listed in the strategic plan?
22. What is your current fundraising priority?
23. What are the annual goals of your department/office?
24. What are some of your annual fundraising activities and events?
25. What are the benefits of sponsoring the fundraising events?
26. How would you define alumni?
27. How do you build relationships with alumni?
28. What fundraising strategies work with specific groups? Can you describe some of the groups of alumni?
  - a. Black alumni? Caucasian alumni? Men? Women?
29. How do you engage young alumni (i.e. 22-32)?
30. How do you engage older alumni (i.e. 32+)?
31. In your experience...What are the best ways to engage alumni in fundraising?

32. What role do alumni have in the fundraising at the college?
33. What are some of the characteristics of alumni who donate to the college?
34. What are some other ways alumni to give back to the college?
35. What are the benefits to alumni?
36. What are some challenges to engaging alumni in fundraising?
37. What is an “ask”?
38. How long to you work with alumni before you ask for financial donations?
39. What are the steps you take to build a trusting relationship with alumni?
40. What are some mistakes you have made with engaging alumni?
41. What are some challenges you face while fundraising for the college?
42. How do you maintain a positive relationship with alumni?
43. Describe the steps you take to build a successful relationship with alumni...
44. What are the positive outcome that you anticipate from your interaction with alumni?
45. What are the positive outcomes that come from your on-going interactions with alumni?
46. What are some negative outcomes of your interactions with alumni? Could you give me an example?
47. What is an endowment?
48. How do your interactions with alumni affect the college endowment?
49. What is the best part of your job?
50. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences as a IA professional?

51. Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

52. Would I be able to contact you again for additional questions about your role here at the college?

## Appendix D

### Worksheet #1: A Graphic Design of a Multiple Case Study

